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CASTLE WINDOWS.

BY

LATHAM CORNELL STRONG.

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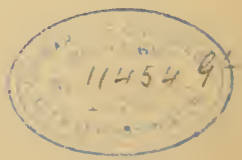

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THESE

POOR IVY LEAVES,

WHICH HAVE CLAMBERED ABOUT

MY CASTLE WINDOWS IN SPAIN,

I Dedicate,

WITH RENEWED REGARD AND ESTEEM, TO MY FRIEND,

FRANCIS THEODORE PATTON (McLEOD NOYES),

IN REMEMBRANCE OF

THE MANY HAPPY HOURS SPENT TOGETHER

IN THE GOLDEN MEADOWS OF

THE PAST.

PREFACE.

When "Heidelberg Castle" was written, about two years ago, and subsequently when most of the longer poems now printed with it, and which seemed to be so fair in the first ardor of their composition, had been completed, I had few doubts as to the propriety of publishing them. Since, however, I have returned from my excursion into cloudland, and in soberer mood have contemplated my little cabinet of curiosities and souvenirs gathered there with so much enthusiasm, the hazard of the choice between probable temerity in submitting them to the public, and the possibly greater folly of a too rigid self-repression in turning the key upon them forever, has rapidly grown until it has assumed colossal proportions. It is unpleasant to picture Apollo, fresh from Olympus, radiant with immortal youth, alighting on the plains with his lyre slung across

his shoulders, and at once assuming the attitude of self-defense ; but poets have never been spared the application of indignant cudgels until they have made good their claims to the fields to which they have descended, and on which they would dwell at peace with all men. How many flaws there may be in the title-deeds herewith offered, it is impossible to say ; but the author has a reasonable confidence that they will not all be discovered by any one reader.

CONTENTS.

PERVERSITY 9
The Rhyme of Thula 10
THE TREASURE OF THE TROPIC SEAS 23
When Baby Died 45
Under the Wreck 49
After the Rain 53
A Summer Idyl 56
West Point 63
The Fever 66
To a Coquette 74
In the Singer's Place 77
Who will Care in the Coming Year 79
Beautiful Eyes 82
Baby at the Window 85
A Stricken Home 89
Broken Windows 97
What the Brook Said 99
Golden Meadows 103
Vistas 107

Quest..... 112
Looking Down the Western Hills..... 115
Cinderella..... 117
The Herdsman of Baiae..... 121
Castilian..... 137
Llewellyn..... 140
Poor Old Ralph..... 143
The Phantom Schooner..... 146
Bonnie Belle..... 150
Shadows..... 153
Impanelling a Jury..... 156
The Russian Ball..... 157
Our Rifle Team..... 167
The Statue..... 170
Into the Light..... 174
Homespun: A Fragment..... 176
The Vampire..... 179
Moonlight on the Water..... 180
The Invisible Prince..... 183
The Owl..... 189
A Centurion Dying at the Gates of Rome..... 190
On the Steps of the Vatican..... 194
The Mystery of Heidelberg Castle..... 201

Castle Windows.

PERVERSITY.

This path was hedged with plants and flowers;
Through fruited trees shone lofty towers,
And stairways white, and fountains tall,
With waving banners over all.

That path was hedged with noxious weeds—
Across a marshy tract of reeds,
And down a devious, somber lane,
It led into some gloomy plain.

Now scarce a traveler stopped to gaze,
But dropping careless word of praise,
With swinging step, and easy load,
He sauntered down the gloomy road!

THE RHYME OF THULA.

I.

She leaned o'er the Gothic window wall ;
He sat in the edge of the waving wheat ;
She was a dainty princess small,
He was an oaf with pointed feet.
Over the castle, in the sun,
Fluttered the banners, green and gold ;
Up from the meadows, one by one,
Nodded the antlers through the wold.
Birds flew over
The corn and clover,
And swarmed like bees on the bended tree,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy !

II.

She lowered her silken tresses down,
And out they blew in a cloud of gold;
He skipped from the wayside heather brown
Unto the porch of the castle old.
She laughed in the merry noontime there,
As he clung to the casement arched and tall,
And climbed by her silken, shining hair,
Over the Gothic window wall.
Sweet the noontime,
Fair the June-time,
Birds were singing in maddest glee,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

III.

Now through the winding halls they glide,
Through purple windows the sunshine slants;
Twisted columns on either side
Of silver-in-pearl the eyes entrance.
She at his side, with airy grace,
Leans to the words of a lute-like spell,

Flutters her fan in his homely face,
And laughs that an oaf should talk so well.
Faintly ringing,
Bells are swinging
Elfland echoes along the lea,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

IV.

Beside the turret window then
His vows he murmured faint and low,
And the princess merrily laughed again,
And shaped her eyes to a yes and no.
And then to his grizzled face, she read
His homely outline through and through;
And twirling her silken scarf, she said,
"Who would marry an oaf like you?"
Around the towers,
And in the flowers,

The birds are twittering angrily,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

v.

As a dragon-fly in the river reeds
Hustles his threadbare cloak aside,
The oaf in a trice flung off his weeds,
And stood transformed in a splendid pride.
Gaily there, with the violet glooms
Fretting his tunic's silk, a lord.
Blue and white were his waving plumes,
Bossed with pearl was his dainty sword.
The lily lowly,
Swinging slowly,
Hid in its bosom the dozing bee,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

VI.

Now at her feet, in gems and lace,
The young lord kneels on the velvet floor.
Her hand he kisses with charming grace,
And repeats his merry words once more.
She looks in his eyes with sweet surprise,
"Thula, the princess, wed a lord?
Nay"—and the little maiden sighs—
"What can your noble house afford?"
Slyly peeping,
A mouse out creeping,
Reached through the window-vines to see;
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

VII.

"What can your house afford like these?"
And out at the sunshine-checkered lawn
She waved her hand where the aisles of trees,
The parks of cedar, and golden fawn,

The fragrant dells with their citron shade,
And the almond groves with their glimpse of blue,
Where the sea-line glitters above the glade,
Broke in their beauty upon the view.
Tall-capped grasses
In moving masses,
Like grenadiers, marched to the sea ;
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy !

VIII.

By an inner door of cedarn wood,
Richly fretted with carvings quaint,
She bade him gaze, and in silence stood,
Shrined in her hair like a gloried saint.
What did he see ? Through the open door
A white-haired sire, and a mother old,
A group of children upon the floor,
With a greyhound jumping a hoop of gold.

From crevice mossy
A sparrow saucy
Hopped on the window and chirped with glee,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

IX.

He stamped his foot within the hall,
He claspt a jewel upon her wrist,
When lo! the castle, pillar and wall,
Dissolved and faded into mist!
The towers were faintly outlined there,
Around about like a phantom court,
Enchanted all, in the amber air,
Battlement tall, and bannered fort!
Birds were singing,
Bells were ringing,
Faintly murmured the distant sea,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

X.

Here in a broad pavilion's shade,
  Nodding his plumes, he softly said,
"These my house can afford the maid,
  Who one like me for his love would wed."
Interspaces of summer sky,
  Amid a tremulous maze of leaves,
Let fall aslant in the garden nigh,
  The sunlight faint on the fountain sheaves,
    And down the meadow,
    In sun and shadow,
White horses galloped with nostrils free,
    All in the rhyme
    Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

XI.

Tall trees pillared a stately court,
  Broad-based stairways upward ran;
Tropical birds in wanton sport,
  Swiftly flew in the palms of fan.

A pleasaunce realm is this, where sits
A shadow faint in the great green trees,
And wafts sweet odorous balm, by fits,
O'er leaves of myrrh on the passing breeze.
And still are ringing,
Sweetly swinging,
Fairy bells by lake and lea,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy!

XII.

Through a mazy mist the maiden views
The stately dome, and the marble halls,
The windows tinted with iris hues,
The peacock strutting upon the walls;
The fountain tall, with its triple plumes
Dancing there in the fragrant air,
And the colonnades with tropic blooms,
That prankt with vines the winding stair;
The nodding tula
Murmurs "Thula."

"Thula," "Thula," the bird and bee ;
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy !

XIII.

"Fairer, my lord, than mine is yours !"
The princess, smiling sweetly, said ;
"Tho' I've a choice of fairy wooers,
You are the one with whom I'll wed.
Fairer far these lofty towers,
And terrace gardens faint and sweet,
Than all the wealth of my castle bowers,
Than loving home and pleasures meet."
Words discreetly
Voiced so sweetly
Were echoed faintly from the sea,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy !

XIV.

He tapped his foot upon the lawn,
And loosed the jewel from her wrist,
And lo ! the fairy realm was gone,
And the castle old in its place uprist !
Beside her, kneeling upon the floor,
The young lord clasped her dainty hand ;
" Arise ! " she said ; " ere the day is o'er,
Your bride will follow you through the land ! "
The sparrows scold in
The branches golden,
Lifting their wings in the bended tree,
All in the rhyme
Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy !

* * * * * * * *

XV.

Alas ! in a hut she dwells forlorn,
Driven about, with curse and blow,
Down to the fields to gather corn,
Up to the well-spring, to and fro !

He but an oaf with pointed feet,
  She but a wife grown old with care ;
She no longer a princess sweet,
  He no longer an elfin fair !
    Birds outflying,
    Faint are crying,
Gone is our kingdom by the sea :
    All in the rhyme
    Of an ancient time,
That was full of mirth and minstrelsy !

THE TREASURE OF THE TROPIC SEAS.

Where the air is hot, and the trees bend down
In the southern noons to the tropic rays,
Long, pendulous tresses, matted and brown,
That the fierce heats vex through the languid days;
Where the blue waves break into strange, low words
As they reach far up on the burning sands,
There are regions sweeter with song of birds
And tropical airs than our northern lands.

Sweeter with love of the passionate flowers,
With skies that twinkle with purple and gold,
And tall, arched palms, that in stately towers
Are bastioned with cocoas and laurels old.
That are pillared with pines in the depths below,
The haunt of the myriad shining things
That flash in the sunlight to and fro,
In a ceaseless flutter of rainbow wings.

THE TREASURE OF THE TROPIC SEAS.

"What if the weary years have fled,
And hearts are crushed, and friends are dead,
And loves are sundered one by one,
And all things bright beneath the sun
Become but glimpses of the past—
They bring us to our own at last!

"Yon homestead wears unto the gaze
The dear old look of other days,
And stands, low-eaved, with chimney tall,
Above the moss-grown garden wall.
And from the meadow, through the lane,
Swinging from side to side, the wain,
Tilt from the top with clover new,
Drawn by the oxen, meets the view.

With slanting wings the swallows skim
Close to the old barn's jutting rim :
And yonder, leaning o'er the gate
That leads out to the fields, await
The whinnying horses, fenced within
For fare of oats fresh from the bin.
The well-sweep, by the path below,
Seems just the same that, long ago,
The hot midsummer season through,
Buckets of clear, cool water drew.
I hear at times the tinkling sound
Of bells, where woolly flocks abound,
And catch the music faint and sweet
Of village voices down the street ;
Where oft we strayed ere Alfred Lee
Left yonder homestead for the sea ;
Left hearth and home and scenes as dear
As those that greet my vision here ;
And with him trusty friends and tried,
Who now are scattered far and wide.
His message, and for whom ? alas !
The years in swift succession pass—

Counting them over so and so,
'Tis more than twenty years ago—
And who remain to list, or care
To hear the message that I bear?
Not one, perhaps, whose heart has beat
For years at sound of coming feet,
With wild, fond yearning o'er and o'er,
To clasp the loved one at the door."

This said he in the clover down,
Beneath the oaks beyond the town,
Where by the road a grateful shade
Was cast, and where, through tilth and glade,
A running brook wound in and out,
And, with the hum of bees about
The brank above, made silence sweet
And musical through summer's heat.
Bronzed by the suns of eastern seas,
Gray-haired, but lithe of limb, at ease
He stood, shading his eyes to gaze
Again on scenes of olden days.

Then by the dusty highway sought
The homestead, fain, of saddened thought,
Old friends to greet.

Now, through the wold
Glimmered the sunset's mellowed gold,
And Donald Lee sat where the breeze
Came cool across the marshy leas ;
Sat by the open window, where
The scent of lilacs filled the air ;
And as he watched the drifted spray
Of sunset clouds, at close of day,
He fancied—gazing thus the while
At beach of blue and silver isle,
Palmed white, like lilies in the sun
Just when the golden day was done—
He saw a ship sink from the sight,
As sometimes, in his dreams at night,
When on the mad waves, tempest-torn,
A pale, brave face was upward borne.
—The goodwife, knitting by the door,
Had dropped her work, and glancing o'er

Her glasses, caught his thoughts, and sighed—
For well remembered were the pride
And love a mother's heart had felt
When Alfred Lee beside her knelt.
Thus, sitting in the evening still,
They heard the far-off whippoorwill,
While from the meadow's deepening shade,
The crickets plaintive chirping made;
When by the gate a stranger stood,
Whom thought of home, perhaps, had wooed,
They said, for hospitable cheer,
Rest, and relief, and comfort, here.
They bade him welcome—spread the board
With viands from their humble hoard,
And Donald, in his farmer way,
Talked of the topics of the day,
Such as the fruitage, yield of grain,
The growth of grass, the need of rain,
And kindred subjects; but the guest,
Of absent mood, ill feigned a zest
In theme bucolic; so the host,
Persuaded thus, to charm him most,

After the evening meal was through,
And pipes were lit, of what was new
In other fields with skill conversed,
And then the story sad rehearsed
Of Alfred Lee, long years astray,
When spake the stranger in his way:
"Stay, good my friends, *I* knew him well,
And hither from the sea, to tell
His story, as he told it me,
I come, well known of Alfred Lee."
The old folks, tearful-eyed and pale,
Scarce gave full credence to the tale,
But hung upon the words he said,
As 'twere a message from the dead:

"The lighthouse faded from the sight
By ten, and glided to the right
Behind old Cheviot Ledge—and Lee,
Pacing the deck twelve leagues at sea,
Now bitterly complained the fate
That led him seaward—but too late

Were longings then, or bitter tears ;
And all the grief of later years
Centered in one fond dream of home.
On sped the good ship through the foam,
Cleaving the blue waves night and day,
Past walls of white, and isles of gray,
With groves of orange and of palm
On either side, through seas acalm,
To Oriental port, to trade.
The ship, in freighting, long delayed,
Exchanging cargoes, wool and maize
For silks and spices ; so the days
Lengthened to weeks of idle weather.

" And here we spent the time together,
As best we could ; leaving the bay,
We beat the shore at break of day,
When like a ghost the moon bent under
The western world, as clouds asunder
Were rent by rays of tropic heat ;
Or from the deck the tiny fleet

Of native boats we watched for hours,
Laden with plantain, fruit, and flowers,
Glide in and out, and smoothly slip
Beneath the shadow of the ship.
But when upon the azure main,
The vessel spread its sails again,
Like sea-bird bending to its flight,
Its white wings glowing in the light,
A glad form rose upon the view,
And shoreward waved a last adieu.
The skies bent down to ship and sea,
And closed at last on Alfred Lee.

"Our lives are set by storm and sun,
And through a change of seasons run,
Much as the meadow or the main,
Though oft you know by grief or pain
The heavens are clouded o'er and o'er,
Till hope seems gone forevermore.
Like patriarchs had passed away
With burdened shoulders, through the gray,

Dim twilight to the dead, the years,
With alternating hopes and fears ;
To Alfred Lee, grown old with grief,
Their pilgrim steps brought no relief.

"Where down the purple slope that slants
Across the hills, the sun-rays glance
With hot stare through the cocoa-trees,
And wine-palms tent beside the seas,
To Port-of-Spain, long leagues away,
Just as the mellow mist of day
Was glowing in the east, there came
A wayworn man, whose feeble frame
And weary step and silent tears,
Meant more of sorrow than of years.
But when he saw the seaport town,
With houses bamboo-thatched and brown,
And marked each winding lane and street,
Cool-shaded from the tropic heat,
He bent him prone upon the ground
For this—that he at last had found

What brought a worn heart hope of rest.
'Twas Alfred Lee—thrice happy blest
For all the madness he had borne,
The anguish that his heart had torn,
The grief that left him gaunt and gray,
The night-long yearning for the day.
And so they pitied him, and knew
By sadd'ning sign—good friends and true—
A life was drawing to a close
With all its hidden wants and woes.
And so unto a home half hid
By wealth of vines, that stood amid
An almond grove beside the sea,
They led poor, dying Alfred Lee.

* * * * * *

"The night was hot, and faint, and still—
The moon, above the wooded hill,
A line of silver lances pressed
Across the sea-waves to the west.
The bell-bird, with metallic throat,
Sounded a dull and doleful note,

And in the distant depths of wood
The bittern broke the solitude.
But, save the sound of sea and bird,
Scarce anything the silence stirred.
Now through the cottage windows, turned
To feeble glow, the night-lamp burned ;
And fainter still the sad heart wore
Throughout the night, though often o'er
His haggard face a strange light shone,
As reason would resume its throne ;
When, half-way rising from the bed,
'Yes, going home,' he feebly said.
Before he laid him down to die,
He told his sufferings, and why
No tidings reached his friends—and then
He pictured o'er and o'er again
The home his fond heart loved so well.
And this the tale he told to me
There, in that home beside the sea :

" 'First weather fair, then stormy sail,
Then sun again, and then a gale,

Rounding the Cape, that beat amain
With such a run of cloud and rain,
That when the winds had ceased to blow,
Our ship was scarce seaworthy—so
At last, upon a moonless night,
She sank—and when the morning light
Shone on the lifted white caps, none
Remained of all on board, save one,
Who, stranded on a reach of land,
Lay half unconscious on the sand.
A lonely isle in tropic seas,
Thick-clustered to the peak with trees,
Full-fruited in the sun, and rills
That glimmered down the rifted hills,
Sustained the life the sea had saved,
And gave what nourishment it craved.
Above a tall fern on the slope
I set a shred of sail, with hope
That from the blue horizon line
Some passing ship would mark the sign ;
Some sailor, from his lookout, chance
To catch the signal in his glance.

But all in vain—alas! I knew
No such a sign the long years through.

"' Wild cliff and chasm I passed in turn,
Thick with the growth of shrub and fern,
And scarlet blaze of tangled vines
Dropped low in curved and broken lines;
While flash of birds through miles of wood
Relieved the tropic solitude.
And now and then, through lofty trees,
The moan of hollow-throated seas,
Sobbing against the rocky reef,
Arose, as if to mock my grief;
While chattering apes through tree-tops ran,
Nor feared the footsteps strange, of man.

"' I thatched with bark a cabin rude,
Beneath the curtain of the wood,
And day by day, betwixt the trees,
Scanned, with an anxious eye, the seas;
While through the watches of the night
The signal blazed upon the height—

Burned with a steady glow, afar
Across the waves, a flaming star.

" ' The fringes of the forest hung
In wild luxuriance among
Broad aisles of palm and cinnamon ;
Where oft, between the sea and sun,
The flight of tropic birds gleamed through
Like bits of rainbow on the blue.
And in the dull, hot afternoons
The hum of bees, and chorussed tunes
At intervals, through maze of boughs,
Made eyelids heavy and adrowse.
Thus, seaward gazing from the door,
I watched, below, the shingled shore
Lengthen to meadows far and still ;
I saw the old church on the hill,
The dear home sheltered by the oaks,
The bars beyond the brook ; the folks
Idling about the village store ;
The hayfield where we toiled of yore,

In heat of summer ; and the glade,
Cool with its lengths of hawthorn shade ;
The loved ones at the porch—and then,
Lone stretch of sky and sea again.

" ' So passed the years. But once, around
A high-peaked promontory, crowned
With wild volcanic rock, I swung,
Grasping the creeping vines, that hung
Above a wild chasm rifted wide,
And down its ribbed and riven side
Unto the white beach and the spray.
I stood beside a little bay
Curved 'neath the fern trees bending o'er.
But there was that upon the shore
That made my heart beat wild and fast ;
I found the remnant of a mast,
Part sunken, lying slantingwise,
And nigh it bits of merchandise,
Some spars, a broken anchor, and
A chest half buried in the sand ;

A quaint old chest of iron, chased
With lines the sea had nigh erased.

* * * * * *

" 'A crazed man sat beside his door,
Upon an island, gloating o'er
His treasure, and a day and night
Passed one another in their flight;
And still he sat, and through his hands
A something gleamed like glowing sands.
Jewels, numberless in the sun,
Slipped from his fingers, one by one,
And in the moonlight brightly shone
Diamond, pearl, and emerald stone.
And from a chest flung open wide,
Ingots of gold, and bars, beside,
Of silver, tranced the vision; more
Than wealth of princes here in store.

" 'A weird face, lifted from the seas,
Shook high its white locks in the breeze;
It reached far up the sloping land
And clutched me with its misty hand.

I started from my gold, and gave
An angry gesture to the wave ;
And then my grief came back to me,
The lonely isle, the shore, the sea,
The shipwreck of the years ago,
The pain that only they can know
Who suffer solitude, and die
An hundred deaths and live—as I.
But when the stormy seas were still,
And through the ferns that fringed the hill
The hot rays glimmered down the glen,
And chorussed songs rang out again,
I builded castles, towered tall,
That stretched unto the blue sea wall,
And from their windows watched in vain
For sign of sail across the main.

" ' I was the monarch of an isle,
In wretchedness to dwell, the while
Heart-sick and worn ; and then to rave
O'er all the wealth the heart could crave,

And watch and wait, the long years through,
For some dear face across the blue,
And then—all this—and then to glide
Out seaward with the turning tide.

* * Soon, in the silver age of man
Before my time, I ceased to plan
For that which gold alone can bring,
Nor cared for life or anything;
But wandered up and down the wood,
And learned to love its solitude;
Or watched the blue waves through the trees,
And dreamed of home across the seas.
The birds, that knew me, as I walked,
Flew circling round, and sang, and talked
Of happier lands and brighter skies,
With plaintive pity in their eyes.

"'Who stood upon the cliffs with me,
With hands outstretched unto the sea,
And motioned to the tide, and said:
"No grief disturbs the blessed dead"?

Who pointed downward to the deep,
Crooning its nodding waves to sleep,
And urged my fainting heart to quell
Such anguish as no tongue can tell?
With firm resolve, and purpose bold,
I gathered up my treasured gold,
And as the jewels, one by one,
With rainbow radiance in the sun,
Flashed into flame and dazzled me,
I flung them out into the sea!
In lines and curves of brilliant glow
They sank into the waves below;
No prince, with largess at command,
E'er gave it with a freer hand,
Or laughed more wildly to behold
The struggle for his scattered gold.
And then, at last! deep in the west,
As, glistening on the ocean's breast,
The last bright jewel dropped from view,
There shot a white gleam from the blue.
There came, as one first sees the light
When long years blind—*a sail in sight!*

* * As poor as when I left, to roam,
I set a strange face toward my home,
And landed here upon your strand,
A wand'rer from a foreign land.'

"This was the story that he told.

"Dead, did you say? No, no, but old,
And worn with waiting to be free.
Dear ones, this record of the sea
Is mine—for I am Alfred Lee."

WHEN BABY DIED.

The day the Baby died, the flowers
  Drooped o'er the leaf,
And birds, within the shady bowers,
  Piped plaintively their grief.
And through the garden, in the sun,
It seemed as if the day were done,
  When Baby died!

As if o'er all the land a sudden blight
  Had withered flower and leaf in one short breath;
Unto a mother's heart day turned to night,
  As life to death.
While to her now comes back with sudden tears
  The winsome face, the tossing curls aglow,
  The little feet that pattered to and fro,

The angel wisdom of three happy years,
All ending with such suddenness of woe,
When Baby died!

From out the drawer she takes, with trembling care,
The little shoes that Baby used to wear.
Ah! but the silence of the missing feet,
The tearful vision of the face so sweet.
Baby's dead!
Put in its place away the curl of hair—
Nay, she will press it to her lips again,
And, dreaming of the years that might have been,
The mother folds her hands in speechless prayer.
Baby's dead!

Why, Baby was the playmate of the birds—
They missed him ere the second day was gone,
And twittered round the porch with pleading words;
But silent was his voice upon the lawn!
The hoop lay where he left it by the wall,
The swing was motionless, and over all

Such silence seemed to reign,
That from the lonely room the sob of pain
Was echoed in sad hearts, although they knew
Their little friend the shining gates passed through,
When Baby died!

His gypsy dog no more will bear the rein,
Nor draw about his tiny cart again.
The hands are crossed—the little soul is free,
And Baby sleeps beneath the churchyard tree.
No more against his mother's face he'll press
His dainty cheek, with many a coy caress;
No more he'll clasp his little hands and pray,
In words she taught his rosy lips to say;
Nor will he blithely talk
Of things so wise beyond his baby years.
Put in their place the playthings that he left;
About the house each dear, remembered walk
Brings to a mother's eyes the blinding tears,
Since her fond heart was of its joy bereft,
When Baby died!

So, leave the chamber to its silent gloom,
And put aside the little cradle bed,
And draw the curtains ; close the sacred room—
'Tis filled with mournful mem'ries of the dead.
For e'en the pictures hanging on the wall,
Some thoughts recall,
That start the tears unbidden ; and the vine
That clusters round the windows still will keep
Its flowers nodding in the shade, and shine
To greet him when he wakens from his sleep.

Baby's dead !
And all in vain crushed hearts must reason why
Their loved ones in their bloom and beauty die.
Life holds but love alone, sufficient worth
To bind our weary feet unto the earth ;
And hearts are breaking for the love they lost,
When some dear soul the shadowy river crossed !

UNDER THE WRECK.

She clasps her dainty hands so fine ;
They quaff deep cups of golden wine.

She pledges thus, with brimming chalice,
"The guests that throng the sea-king's palace."

Throughout the halls responsive stirred
The lips that could not utter word.

And men and women in the glow
Are moving weirdly to and fro.

What is she like, the sea-king's daughter ?
Her eyes are stars upon the water.

Her smile is like the moonlight pale,
That frets a fairy's purple sail;

And like the sea-dawn in its hue,
The braidings of her mantle blue.

Down through the depths a throng doth glide
Beneath the ever-swaying tide.

Up broad, white steps they seek the hall;
An utter silence presses all.

And men and women in the glow
Are moving weirdly to and fro.

Past pages bowing at the door.
Past butlers prone upon the floor.

Past pacing sentries grim and old,
With lifted faces white and cold.

Wearing a sad, sweet smile of joy,
A mother clasps her fair-haired boy.

A child, with locks of tangled gold,
Lifts up its white hands, thin and cold.

And men and women in the glow
Are moving weirdly to and fro.

In tasselled cap a fisher lad
Goes slowly by with features sad.

A sailor scans, with trembling hand,
The outlines of a distant land.

And from the balcony above,
A white-robed lady waits her love.

Two sisters clasped, uncertain seem
To move their heads, as in a dream.

Upon the sea-rock's jasper bed
An old man sits with bended head.

Within a wide-pavilioned court
The sea-king's jester nods in sport,

Nodding his bells with listless eye,
As silently they pass him by.

And men and women in the glow
Are moving weirdly to and fro.

Then with her dainty hand so fine,
She lifts the cup of golden wine,

And pledges thus, with brimming chalice,
"The guests that throng the sea-king's palace."

Throughout the halls responsive stirred
The lips that could not utter word.

And men and women in the glow
Are moving weirdly to and fro.

AFTER THE RAIN.

The hedges glisten with the rain,
The thunder mutters in the hills,
The mellow sunlight floods the plain,
The blue, wet woods are bright again,
And sweet the murmur of the rills.

I hear the sound of little feet,
And catch a glad, exulting cry,
As on the curtained window seat
Two little, roguish faces meet,
To see the rainbow in the sky.

The scent of roses fills the air.
The fragrance of the new-mown hay
Is blown across the meadows, where
The patient oxen meekly stare—
And silence marks the close of day.

The tumbling brook unceasing swirls,
The rainbow fades along the skies,
And as I clasp my little girls,
I note beneath their shining curls
Two little pairs of drowsy eyes.

The fresh, green leaves are just ajar,
And fluttering birds are chirping low ;
The village bell sounds faint and far,
And softly now the evening star
Above the hill begins to glow.

Two white-robed little ones to-night
Together kneel beside the bed ;
And as the moon, with fingers light,
Is pushing back the curtains white,
Two little prayers are softly said.

The night is come with mist and moon,
The falling waters sob and sing,
The crickets chant a measured tune,
And all the strange, sweet life of June
By day and night is worshiping.

Two little darlings, fast asleep,
Together wander, hand in hand,
Through moonlit valleys still and deep,
And down the mountains dark and steep,
Into the realm of fairy-land.

And rustling pinions seem to glow,
And fill the room with tender light,
As if some angel, last to go,
Had lingered from the rest below,
To kiss the little ones good-night!

A SUMMER IDYL.

Sitteth a maiden with forehead fair,
And soft gray eyes with joy complete,
Twining with roses her russet hair
In the shade of the garden, cool and sweet;
Leaneth the lover below the trees,
Over the gate where the leafage green
Rises and falls in the dainty breeze,
And the struggling sunbeams slip between.

(*'Tis a broken heart that crieth aloud!*
Oh! smooth are the folds of the wedding-shroud;
White bride lilies are on her breast,
And the coffin-pillow is lightly pressed!)

The birds were singing through all the land,
And the white-capped daisy and hooded nun
Went nodding by fields of wheat and sand,
Down to the brook, in the summer sun;
Lifteth the maiden her soft gray eyes;
Unto the lover she smiles, and says,
"'Tis here the four-leaved clover lies
That we sought together in bygone days."

(*Solemnly tolls the cathedral bell!*
What does its iron service tell?
Darkness, despair, and silence cold,
Dust and decay and the graveyard mold!)

"Be this a token, my love, from me—"
As under the chestnut trees they stray—
"Of a love that forever abides with thee—"
And she gives him the four-leaved clover spray.
A starling atilt on a thistle-head,
As the lover lifted her gypsy hat,
Warningly piped, as he swung and fed,
And scattered the seeds this way and that.

(With a violet hue the sun-rays fall
Through the chancel pane, on the velvet pall;
And the lilies have folded each waxen leaf,
As one who claspeth his hands in grief!)

Unto her cottage he leads his bride;
Twinkles a star in the pale-blue west;
Lingereth lovingly by his side
The maiden who seemeth of maidens blest.
"Be this a token, my love, from me—"
Haunteth her parting word—and hark!
"Of a love that forever abides with thee—"
Good night! good night! and the day grows dark.

(Slowly and sadly, in solemn state
The mourners pass through the churchyard gate;
And the poplars seem, in a mute despair,
To bend like Druids their heads in prayer!)

Sunbrowned lover and gypsy maid!
Why do the stars so gayly ride,
And joyfully into the purple shade
Drop down the west in the golden tide?

Do they bear away with their shining selves
A love, a memory, sweet and true,
While after the lover the white-plumed elves
Are tossing their slippers through the dew?

(*The wild wind moaneth with tender plaint,*
And dies away in a whisper faint;
Harshly the grating earth is stirred;
Often the stifled sob is heard!)

Summer has changed to Autumn gray;
Lovers have parted, mayhap, ere this;
Birds unmated have flown away,
And hearts have chilled at the bridal kiss.
He, most cruel, her heart deceives,
Laughingly crosses the broad blue main;
She by her window sits and grieves,
Watching and waiting for him in vain!

(*Solemn the words that the preacher saith:*
That which we have we share with Death,
And yield at last with a hopeful trust—
Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust!)

And the elves are tinting the oaks with gold,
Their brown caps fluttering to the ground,
And clover meadows are bleak and cold,
And chilling winds have a lonesome sound;
While, tangled in scarlet maze, the vines
Swing to the sill from the cottage eaves,
By the window where, dying, a maid reclines,
While plaintively moan the autumn leaves.

(*O desolate hearth! so cold, so dark,*
No comfort now—not one faint spark!
Only the death-bed flowers are left,
Faded and dull—of her love bereft!)

Returneth the wanderer home at last;
Softly the summer sunshine falls
Over the pathways of the past,
And the cottage porch, and the castle walls.
"Be this a token, my love, from me"—
To his lips he presseth a faded leaf—
"Of a love that forever abides with thee!"
And his heart is bowed with a bitter grief.

(*A bit of broidery left undone,*
Folded there in the slanting sun,
A glove, a ribbon, a silken skein,
Bring to the heart such throbs of pain!)

Now to her cottage home he hies.
The bees are murmuring down the croft,
And, hid by a cloud in the dappled skies,
Swooneth the lark in his song aloft.
Silent and chill is the waiting-room,
Strangely deserted the oaken hall;
Now he beholdeth, amid the gloom,
The funeral garlands—and knoweth all!

(*Stealthily hide your thoughts to-day;*
Bury the past in its grave away;
We catch but glimpses of Heaven below,
As the golden gates swing to and fro!)

Half in the sunshine, violet hid,
And far from the stir of the busy street
Lieth the grave of his love, amid
Wild brier, thyme, and primrose sweet.

Close to the shaft of marble stone
Clingeth the clover white and red,
And its sweet wild blooms, in the breezes blown,
Are a token still from the heart of the dead!

WEST POINT.

COMMENCEMENT eve ! and the ballroom belle,
In her dazzling beauty, was mine that night,
As the music dreamily rose and fell,
And the waltzers whirled in a blaze of light.
I can see them now, in the moonbeam's glance,
Across the street, on a billowy floor,
That rises and falls with the merry dance,
To a music that floats in my heart once more

A long half hour in the twilight leaves
Of the shrubbery—she, with coquettish face,
And dainty arms in their flowing sleeves,
A dream of satins, and love, and lace.

In the splendor there of her queenly smile,
Through her two bright eyes, I could see the glow
Of cathedral windows, as up the aisle
We marched to a music's ebb and flow.

All in a dream of Commencement eve,
I remember I awkwardly buttoned a glove
On the dainty arm, in its flowing sleeve,
With a broken sentence of hope and love.
But the diamonds that flashed in her wavy hair,
And the beauty that shone in her faultless face
Are all I recall, as I struggled there,
A poor brown fly, in a web of lace.

Yet a laughing, coquettish face I see,
As the moonlight falls on the pavement gray,
And I hear her laugh in the melody
Of the waltz's music across the way.
And I kept the glove, so dainty and small,
That I stole as she sipped her lemonade,
Till I packed it away, I think, with all
Of those traps I lost on our Northern raid.

But I never can list to that waltz divine,
With its golden measure of joy and pain,
But it brings, like the flavor of some old wine,
To my heart the warmth of the past again.
A short flirtation—that's all—you know,
Some faded flowers, a silken tress,
The letters I burned up years ago,
When I heard from her last in the Wilderness.

I suppose, could she see I am maimed and old,
She would soften the scorn that was changed to hate
When I chose the bars of the gray and gold,
And followed the South to its bitter fate.
But, here's to the lads of the Northern blue,
And here's to the boys of the Southern gray,
And I would that the Northern star but knew
How the Southern cross is borne to-day.

THE FEVER.

From a cave in a gloomy mountain, a brown dwarf, in the night,
Leaned, gazing over the billows at the moon that was blue and white;
He bent, with hand uplifted, and tangled locks thrown back,
While a serpent's glitter haunted the eyes that were white and black.

At tower-topped abbey windows a dark and grizzled face,
Whose eyes were keen and crafty, seemed to linger round the place,
Till the moon arose at midnight, when, beneath a smuggler's hood,
The pipe-lit, ruddy features like a demon's face outstood!

Where rise the channel Needles that cleave the seas in twain,
There stole a hag-faced creature to gaze upon the main ;
And 'twixt the reefs and surf pools she crouched upon the sand,
While something sharp and shining glistened brightly in her hand !

Within a wrecker's cavern the flickering torches shone,
Where men with belted blouses sat warily alone ;
'Midst clicking dice and glasses they played, with venture bold,
As the flicker of the torches fell athwart their gleaming gold.

Above the dim horizon, like a Titan rushing past,
Uprose the sea rack suddenly, outstretching far and vast,
Toward the spidery-spun outline of a ship against the moon,
While a hoarse and angry murmur broke along the sandy dune !

Anon the sea rose madly, as a zigzag lightning streak
Quivered down its lofty mountains that were black,
and bare, and bleak ;
And the roar upon the sea-rocks, in its hollow, surging
sound,
Was like the wail of ghosts that battled for their bodies
that were drowned.

All this I saw as, dreaming, one sees the moon and
storm,
Or watches some old abbey and a crouching human form,
When at once across the waters I beheld a blackened
wreck,
That became a glowing vessel with my soul upon its deck !

Along the angry ocean the ship in silence drave,
With its lurid masts out-gleaming o'er the boiling of the
wave,
And before me broke a channel that down-sweeping sped
amain,
Till the blackness of the heavens brought a blinding
sense of pain !

Then the sharp, incessant lightning shone a constant, pallid blue,
Showing shapes that flitted past me that no mortal ever knew,
While the cries that pierced the heavens never rose from human lip,
And I stood and listened, hopeless, as down headlong plunged the ship!

Now straightway through the darkness a light began to creep,
As we rounded out the vortex, a hundred fathoms deep;
And the moon, with haggard features, and with tresses white as fleece,
To my soul with sudden shining brought the benison of peace.

Out sailed the ship in silence upon the waters red,
Whence upward to the moonlight lay the faces of the dead;

Gaunt, weird, and wizened faces out-looked with dreadful stare,
While hideous shapes made havoc with the bloodless bodies there!

Out sailed the ship in silence betwixt two mountains tall,
While about the vessel creatures of the deep began to crawl;
And shapeless things, whose bodies I could sense, but not behold,
Uprose with spectral horror, and a shivering sense of cold!

All this I saw as, dreaming, one sees the moon and storm,
When across the sky before us rose a strange and spectral form,
And ghostly shapes in cloud-drifts, like a flurried rush of snow,
Followed fast, with long locks gleaming in a glittering, icy glow!

Then miles of moonlit islands, with hilltops blue and
green,
Like a soft, melodious measure, broke the harshness of
the scene ;
When aport the vessel weirdly loomed the phantom
turrets tall
Of a pile whose litten windows shone aslant the ocean
wall.

And through the pillared towers looked the moon as
through a mist,
When I yielded to a power that my soul could not re-
sist ;
And a music, low as waters in a summer meadow, fell
On my senses as I sank beneath that strange and potent
spell.

Out sailed the ship in silence, straight onward toward the
moon,
When I heard the drowsy murmur, as of leafy woods in
June ;

While on either side beyond us stretched broad meadows, in a glow,
As we neared the phantom towers through a mist-like arch below.

And again I saw, as, dreaming, one beholds the moon and storm,
At tower-topped abbey windows, a crouching human form ;
And the vessel in a vortex plunged headlong down the deep,
When I sank in nerveless terror to a pulseless, death-like sleep !

Then below the channel Needles, that cleft the waves in twain,
I woke to see dark faces gazing out upon the main ;
And when the storm receded, I could hear upon the sand
Men hoarsely shouting over what the sea gave to the land.

And I saw a wrecker's cavern, where flickering torches shone,
Where men with belted blouses sat warily alone ;
'Midst clicking dice and glasses they played, with venture bold,
As the smoky flame of torches fell athwart their gleaming gold !

TO A COQUETTE.

You remember, when last we were boating,
On the beautiful river below,
How sweet was our flirting and floating
Together, a long time ago.
Where the lindens the avenue shaded,
You remember, returning to tea,
When the light of the sunset had faded,
You said you were tired of me?

I thought you were charming and pretty,
When afterward, down at the train,
I hoped you would stay in the city,
And not come to see us again.
But the summers were bright with your beauty,
You came ev'ry June to the place;
I told you (in penance of duty)
I hated the sight of your face.

My sister you thought so romantic,
Her love was so tender and true ;
But me you deemed slow and pedantic,
From sonnets I'd written to you.
You remember the mill in the meadow,
That stood where the blue river ran ;
It was there that we sat in its shadow,
And the fun of your flirting began.

I read to you charming romances,
The piano with fantasies rang ;
You thrilled me with sweetest of glances,
And laughed at a song that I sang.
I met you again in the city,
You called me your villager beau ;
I ventured to say you were witty,
You ventured to tell me to go.

I remember the lover that met you,
One evening, below in the dell ;
You left me abruptly—I let you—
I couldn't do otherwise well.

I gave you a book and some flowers ;
You took them, and threw them aside ;
I know you don't think of those hours,
So thoughtless you are in your pride.

One night, as the rain fell in torrents,
We parted—I held to my heart,
And journeyed to Paris and Florence,
And Rome, with its treasures of art.
I took neither trinket nor token,
To harass my memory here ;
I found that my heart was unbroken,
And wondered you ever were dear.

Returning, I find you unmarried ;
Your beauty's the same, I am told ;
For suitors you always have carried
A heart that is icy and cold.
But come to the Beeches to-morrow—
We are leading the gladdest of lives ;
I am over my sickness and sorrow
And will show you the sweetest of wives.

IN THE SINGER'S PLACE.

Unto a singer at the city gates
An angel from the courts of Heaven sped;
"Long hast thou quarreled with the cruel Fates,"
With winning voice the pitying angel said.

"Go, prove thy heart with riches and renown;
Thou hast them both!" the angel disappeared.
Bewildered then the singer sought the town—
Men lowly bowed to him as one they feared.
There, at the gates where he was wont to sing,
The angel's words had made the singer King!

With riches and renown the singer sweet
Stood at his window, looking down the street;
Rich purple vestments on his person hung,
While at his gates another singer sung.

With tearful eyes, unto the King the bard
Looked up for alms ; but all in vain he pled.
"Sing those who must, let those who may, reward,
The world is wide," the haughty monarch said.
Then, as the singer sadly left the place,
Too late he recognized the angel's face !

WHO WILL CARE, IN THE COMING YEAR?

Who will care, in the coming year,
Whether your coat-of-arms was set
Under the antlers of a deer,
In the halls of some old Plantagenet?
Or whether your coat was smooth and thin,
And your badge no liveried crest of gold,
But the raiment of poverty, lined with sin,
To protect your limbs from the bitter cold?

Who will care, in the coming year,
Whether of high or of low estate
Is the one who is planning and toiling here,
And weaving the web of an unknown fate?

Is there one who cares for you even now,
As you lean your head on your feeble hand,
And think of your lot with a wrinkled brow—
Is there one to console you in all the land?

Who will care, in the coming year,
If your home was a stately mansion tall,
Or simply a hut by the wayside here,
With a few wild vines on the straggling wall?
Or whether you rode in your coach of gold,
Under your trappings, stiff and proud,
When your walls were new, and your wines were old,
And friends with flattering tongues were loud?

Who will care, in the coming year,
Whether you stood in your pride, a man,
Crowned with a nation's honors here,
Or driven to crime by a social ban?
Our lives are mingled as streams that run
In a ceaseless tide, to an unknown sea,
On the crest, the foam and the shining sun,
In the depths, and in darkness, what is to be.

Who will care, in the coming year,
Whether we rest, or toil and spin?
We may not know, in our saintly sphere,
We may not care, in our path of sin.
But I have a fancy, that when the clouds
Shall be rolled away from the city fair,
And we go to join the shining crowds,
That some one will care for us over there!

BEAUTIFUL EYES.

Beautiful, beautiful eyes,
So tenderly watching our steps from afar,
Why do ye fade, as the sunset dies
In the amaranth, under the one sweet star,
That we call our own in the pale blue skies?
Is it a mother,
Who lovingly leans by the purple wall
Of the Silent Land; or the sweet-faced brother
You missed, with the joys that are past recall;
Or is it the angel-face of another,
Who wistfully watches, with all in all
Expressed in those loving eyes?

For still, as the twilight waits beyond,
As the blue waves leach on the capes of gold,

There are eyes that seem with affection fond,
To watch for us there, as in days of old
Beautiful eyes
Waited our coming with joy untold!
While at times, in the tender light, we trace
The outlines faint of an angel face
In the evening skies.
Mournful mem'ries awake, and tears
Arise from the heart with the silent years,
And the soul would rest,
As the faces fade with the fading west!

Beautiful eyes
Our steps pursue with such tender grace!
Change unto tears at the heart's deep sighs,
Break into smiles at the lifted face.
Beautiful eyes,
Wistfully speechful beyond the skies!
Is it a mother,
Who lovingly leans by the purple wall
Of the Silent Land; or the sweet-faced brother

You missed, with the joys that are past recall ;
Or is it the angel face of another,
Who yearningly watches, with all in all
Expressed in those loving eyes ?

BABY AT THE WINDOW.

Roses, fresh in the morning dew,
In cluster lie
By the garden-wall and the porch without,
Lifting their leaves in the sunny blue
Of a summer sky,
While the great brown bee goes whirring by,
Or grumbles and bur-r-r's in the flowers about.

Swallows, twittering round the eaves,
Have a saucy look,
As they bend their wings to the southern air,
And, skimming under the maple leaves,
And beyond the brook,
They flash by the window's sunny nook,
With Baby laughing and crowing there.

Nodding and crowing, pert and prim,
At the window nigh;
Talking with learned birds and bees,
That come with the *strangest* news to him
Under the sky!
From the fields that beyond the mountains lie,
The marsh-gold meadow and tall oak trees!

And stories quaint of the owl-cap elves
Unto him are told,
Till his large brown eyes grow larger still,
And his chubby hands half hide themselves
In his apron's fold,
While the bees and the birds, so wise and old,
Chipper and buzz about Merlin hill.

The squirrel, haunched on a limb to rest,
Has a word to say
Of a marvelous world in the tall tree-tops,
Where the oriole dreams in her swinging nest,
Through the livelong day;
And the locust calls, in his shrilly way,
To his missing mate in the cedar copse.

O little Gold Curls, with your winsome face,
So fresh and fair,
With your wee feet pattering over the floor,
As you nestle back in your cosy place
By the window there,
You tangle our hearts in your wavy hair,
While charming your birds at the cottage door !

And then you're so old, with your large brown eyes,
So at times serene,
As you stand in the sunset's purple glow,
Silently there, and so seeming wise !
I know, as you lean
On your hand, while watching some golden scene
In the clouds, that the angels have made you so.

Roses, blooming the whole day long,
A-sleeping lie
In the garden, rocked by the evening breeze,

While a mother is crooning her cradle-song,
And "Baby bye,"
The birds in a low, sweet voice reply,
Dreamily down from the distant trees.

A STRICKEN HOME.

'Tis better so—the daylight fades,
And noon to night is waning fast;
But faster still life's mournful shades
Encompass me; the die is cast!
Thy fondest smiles were masquerades—
Love's sweetest dream is o'er at last!

Yet oft, in watches of the night,
From years that seemed so fondly fair,
Thy form will darken like a blight
The picture that I fain would spare.
Go! let the world say which is right,
They well may judge who do not care.

Alone. How each fond scene I trace
Hath something of her presence here!
I seem to see her clear-cut face,
Like moon-gleams, shape and disappear;
And round this memory-haunted place
The music of her voice I hear.

As through a mist I catch a gleam
Of light across the deepening gloom;
The sun is shining in a dream,
The lattice rose has lost its bloom;
The death-pale lilies sway, and seem
Weird ghosts that hover round a tomb.

I know that somewhere, in the years,
Full-freighted with their joy and pain,
The sunshine, streaming through our tears,
Shall cheer us with its rays again;
Our peace-dispelling hopes and fears
But chasten hearts that sigh in vain.

Ah, queenly shape that haunteth still
The chamber, standing at my side!

Love was idolatry, until
Thyself forgot the name of bride ;
And love had not the strength of will
To buffet circumstance with pride !

How like the very snow, that falls
So stainless till it touches earth,
Wert thou ! . . . and round these spacious halls
I note thy pride of noble birth,
And curse that hour when lordly walls
Seemed hermitage of vestal worth.

Alas, 'tis neither love nor hate—
The glimmering star of hope has set !
Her shame is mine, and hopeless fate
Unceasing bids my soul forget.
To-morrow, and the world will wait
With scorn and bitter epithet !

How burns the angry sunset o'er
Her bridal gems, that, scattered there
Upon the crimson chamber floor,
She wrested from her lustrous hair,

And at my feet in anguish swore
The falsehood of a deep despair!

The roses clambering up the wall
Are drooping o'er yon balustrade,
And down the wide old Gothic hall
The violet sunlight streaks the shade.
Her harp is mute—yet over all
Her presence seems to form and fade.

Upon the broidered satin bed
Her book lies open at the place
Where but an hour ago she read,
Reclining in her stately grace—
And there I seem to see the dead
And ghost-like beauty of her face!

And through the casement, flung ajar,
What memories the scenes suggest
Of rosy hours, while, near and far,
How sleeps the peaceful world at rest,
Beneath the glow of that one star,
Upon the bosom of the west!

How still the place is ! To the shore,
That bends about this blackened sea
Wherein we live, what hands implore
The aid which sets the spirit free,
Or to oblivion evermore
Consigns the mortal thoughts that be !

The night is rising from the trees,
Her hands, uplifted, trail with stars,
And through my casement comes the breeze,
Spice-laden ; but the silence jars
The sense—as one who dimly sees
Blue summer skies through prison bars.

Again upon the shore we stand,
Together, 'neath the vesper moon ;
The May-sweet roses through the land,
Are prest up to the lips of June ;
And o'er a bridge of golden sand
The sea-lights glimmer down the dune.

Again her hand is clasped in mine,
Once more we meet with fond embrace ;

Her violet eyes, uplifted, shine
Demurely, with that old-time grace,
Which in its glory seemed to shrine
The splendor of her white-rose face.

Nay, nay—the vail at last is drawn
Across those years that buried lie ;
I seek, with all life's promise gone,
Contentment 'neath another sky.
Our lives are like the waves at dawn,
That float in liquid sparkles by !

The iris flower bows its head
Before the glimmer of the blast ;
The jasmines, seemingly so dead ;
Are fresher when the storm is past ;
The roses' blush hath brighter red,
When April skies are overcast.

Yon Magdalen, with sad blue eyes,
Outreaches hands, with tearful plaint,
And from yon Cenci seems to rise
The prayerful pleadings of a saint ;

While through the dusk I hear the sighs
Of some poor weary soul afaint !

A wavering flame streams through the west,
Like tremulous tresses of a form
That crosses hands upon its breast ;
And, with their love-light pure and warm,
Whose eyes on heaven are seen to rest,
In refuge from a coming storm.

Yon antique bronzes chill my heart,
And seem, with livid look of green,
Back from their pedestals to start,
And eye askance the gloomy scene.—
And now the velvet curtains part,
And show a faint, dim shape between !

A shape whose dank and dripping hair
With icy breath the chamber fills ;
A shape that hath a deathlike stare,
Whose presence all my life-blood chills.
'Tis she, who stands supremely there,
Beyond life's weary pains and ills !

'Tis gone . . . the moonlight floods the room,—
Her caged bird twitters soft and low ;
The white bride-lilies' faint perfume
Brings sadly back the long ago.
My heart goes out into the gloom
Forevermore . . . 'tis better so !

BROKEN WINDOWS.

Some say it is west, some east, and then
Some hold it is north, some south, again ;
But wherever it is, we will let it pass—
The place that I mean is built of glass !
Purple and amber and ruby glow
In a thousand tints, on the streets below,
And a wide road leads to this kingdom bright,
Where squares of houses are blocks of light.

Flowers were whispering in the breeze ;
Magpies chattered in gossipy trees ;
Parrots hung by the foot, and told
Wonderful things of this kingdom old ;

Toads hopped by with some dreadful news,
And the owl shrank back to mouse and muse ;
While a bat looked out, with beaded eyes,
And said the people were wondrous wise ;
Then a snake slid past in the slimy grass—
When I heard on a sudden the crash of glass !

The people were gathered by street and square,
By market and shop, in the city there,
Each one of the crowd determined alone
To shatter his neighbor's house with stone !

WHAT THE BROOK SAID.

The chestnuts, dropping one by one,
In the leaves of the dusky dells,
Cracked, as they lay in the slanting sun,
Their curious satin shells;
As little Bopeep and I, one day,
In the lazy autumn weather,
Over the meadows took our way
To the wooded hills, together.

We sat in the hush of the harvest peace,
And the landscape edged away
To the west and south, with the cloudy fleece
Of a mild September day.

And up from meadows of waving grain,
That billowed a golden tide,
The harvesters came, with their loaded wain
High-swinging from side to side.

Beyond the valley were fields of maize,
And forests of purple hue,
And sloping meadows beneath the bays,
That sifted the sunlight through.
While near, a brook, in a cadenced flow,
Laughed loud as it tumbled down,
And we heard the villagers' song below,
Faint-floating above the town.

But high in the landscape's glowing charms,
Like a monarch in grandeur, stood
An oak that stretched its knotty arms
O'er the saplings of the wood.
And here the breezes lingered long
To toy with his leafy beard,
While whistling softly a plaintive song,
Like an echo low and weird.

"Did fairies live in this sunny nook,
Oh, ever so long ago?
Did they live——"
"Ha, ha!" said the running brook,
While the stout oak answered "No!"
"Ha, ha!" said the brook with a laughing sound,
As it murmured down the glen,
"Ere this oak was born, or this country found
By your curious tribes of men,

"When the moon shone over the forest old,
Ere the woodman's ax was known,
The fairies lived by a lake of gold,
In a realm they could call their own.
No prying eyes of a mortal saw
Their kingdom of fair renown,
When Oberon, Mab, and Titania
In turn wore the diamond crown.

"When the lilies that floated along the lake
Were the boats of the fairy crew;

When the bee and the bird, of burn and brake,
Were the only steeds they knew.
That was the fairy age, and bright
Was the earth in its beauty then,
When the moon, with its shafts of silver light,
Enchanted the palaced glen.

"True, the fairy palace faded away,
And the song and the laughter ceased,
And the little folk fled at the faintest ray
Of the morning along the east.
And now no more, in the pale moon's beam,
Do I hear their music low;
But I dream, old oak, as you cannot dream,
Of a beautiful long ago!'

THE GOLDEN MEADOWS.

Beyond the rainbow are the golden meadows,
The castles tall, the brooks, the cooling shadows,
Where diamond turrets gleam across the vale,
And fading seaward drifts a silken sail.
Where oft we hear loved voices faintly calling,
In music sweet upon our senses falling;
Ah! t'is a land of sweet romance, at least,
That lies beyond the rainbow in the east.

How oft with some old melodies arise
The thoughts that bring sad tears up to the eyes!
How oft the leaves of some dear book and olden
Unfold to us such memories glad and golden,
That in our dreams we catch the sunset rays,
That slant across the scenes of other days,

In lands enchanted now, and leagues, at least,
Beyond the shining rainbow in the east.

Beneath yon oak-tree, summer afternoons,
We lunched, straw-hatted, in a June of Junes,
With bee-wings humming in a nook hard by,
And peevish chirp of birds, in foliage nigh,
Pushed from their perch, when toward the glowing west
Phœbus at last his prancing chargers pressed.
Now 'tis a land where Shah Zaman could feast,
And lies beyond the rainbow in the east.

To-day, with half-shut lids, I drowse and dream,
Watching the twinkling pleasaunce of a stream,
That, like the diamonds in some Thea's tresses,
Gleams through the sea-green groves of high Parnassus.
But when I fain would seek the sacred shades,
At once the stream recedes, the landscape fades.
Gone is the dream! At last the songs have ceased,
Far past the glowing rainbow in the east.

Beyond the rainbow golden meadows lie,
And purple mountains kiss the summer sky ;
Where cactus spears and palms outstretching reach
To jeweled sands that ripple on the beach,
With lulling noon-time song of birds and bees,
And flash of dove-throat plumage through the trees.
Ah ! 'tis a land of sweet romance, at least,
That lies beyond the rainbow in the east.

Oft by the sleepy margin of a glade,
When birds are faint, and seek the cooling shade,
We see the shadows lifting into view,
Of cloud-sails dipping slow across the blue,
And bending down to those long-yearned-for places,
Unto the home of dear, familiar faces,
That haunt us with a love that ne'er has ceased,
To cheer us with the rainbow in the east.

So, bright as sun-rays slanting on the floor,
The memories of joys that are no more ! ·
Over the hills and down the leafy wold,
We ne'er may wander as in days of old.

But still before us are the golden meadows,
The castles tall, the brooks, and cooling shadows,
All in that land of dear romance, at least,
That lies beyond the rainbow in the east.

VISTAS.

Let the world give way to its sighing,
  Be prone in its penitent dust,
Be silent, be sad, or be dying,
  Bereft of its infinite trust ;
In the heart of each creature reposes
  The sense of some duty forlorn,
To trample, in passing, the roses,
  And press to its bosom the thorn.

'Tis the way of the world to be fretful,
  Impatient of losses or gain,
To recede from the fields that are yet full
  Of generous fruitage and grain.

While peace in its beauty is shining
Through clouds that are rosy and fair,
The heart of man, ever repining,
Is prone to the gloom of despair.

We utter, with dreariest features,
Our thanks for the roses and rain,
While unto less privileged creatures
The joy is distinct from the pain.
While nature in turn dispossesses
Each one of some cherished repose,
In some way hereafter it blesses
The heart that is burdened with woes.

The lands that are fairest, and languish
In passionate regions of song,
Have quaked in a terrible anguish,
By hap of some terrible wrong.
Though known what its burdensome woe meant,
When rent by its torture within,
'Tis now but the dream of a moment,
Remembrance of sorrow and sin.

But list to the lands and their story !
Awake to the jubilant song !
The burden of all is the glory
Of right overcoming the wrong.
Then lift up your face, in the gray light
Of dawning, forgetful of ruth !
The darkness succumbs to the daylight
Of reason resolving the truth !

The midsummer music of waters,
Of birds in the fluttering leaves,
The chansons of sons and of daughters,
The whisper of moonlighted eves,
The regions of sunshine and laughter,
And love glances furtive and coy—
Are these to be now and hereafter
Held up as a sin to enjoy?

Is the infinite love, in its measure,
Alluring our souls to decay,
Beguiling our hearts with a pleasure,
And followed by death in a day?

A life may be buoyant and youthful,
With memories solemn and sad.
Though faces are patient and truthful,
The smile may be hopeful and glad.

The songs of the wearisome ages
Are breathed in lugubrious lines;
With sadness we lift up the pages,
And study the curious signs.
Through ruins where cities have slumbered
We toil in an intricate maze,
To find, of the ages unnumbered,
But records of sorrowful days.

Our pleasures may grow one by one less;
Our friends may be faithless or few;
To lives that are arid and sunless
Will enter the light and the dew.
Past vistas of meadow and mountain,
Past reaches of shadow and sun,
Beside a low-murmuring fountain,
Is rest when the journey is done.

The song-birds that sang in your May time,
The flowers that bloomed in your June,
The happiness sweet of some daytime,
Made sad by the night over-soon,
The dear ones whose voices, in sorrow,
Seem music half lost in a dream,
Will come to you there on the morrow,
When crossed is the turbulent stream.

QUEST.

I.

O DARLING of the sweet south wind!
Lift up thy modest eye,
And tell me if my true love
This morning passed you by.
"White scarf and blue eyes?
Jaunty hat and feather?
She passed me by this morning,
Tripping through the heather."

II.

O Bossie, with your large brown eyes!
My true love, let me know,
Did you see her pass this morning,
In the meadow-lot below?

"Apple cheek and flaxen hair?
Sweetheart all over?
She went by this morning,
Down through the clover."

III.

O river, with your mantle blue,
A-trailing in the shade!
Pray have you seen my true love,
Wandering in the glade?
"A dainty face with long hair
Streaming in the light?
She passed down the valley,
And then out of sight."

IV.

O screaming gull! above the sea
Have you my true love heard?
She had a voice that you would say
Were sweet as any bird!

"Her hands crossed upon her breast,
I saw her features fond ;
She passed over the waters,
Unto the land beyond ! "

LOOKING DOWN THE WESTERN HILLS.

Looking down the western hills,
Softly are the sea-waves crooning ;
While their ceaseless murmur thrills
All the senses, languid, swooning,
Spite of ills,
Looking down the western hills.

Silent is the scene beyond,
All the tender landscape glowing ;
How a heart, of pleasure fond,
As it nears the ocean flowing,
Will despond !
Silent is the scene beyond.

Looking down the western hills,
Sometimes to sweet strains we listen,
Doubting, though the music thrills,
And the eyes uplifted glisten,
Spite of ills,
Looking down the western hills.

Now the sky is all aglow,
Into gold the waves are breaking ;
Dim the meadow-lands below,
While the evening bells are waking
Echoes low ;
Now the sky is all aglow.

Looking down the western hills,
Now the landscape night is shading ;
And the soul its trust fulfills,
Breathes farewell as earth is fading,
With its ills,
Down below the western hills!

CINDERELLA.

THE air was tinted, through all the land,
With violet light, as, with pompous state,
In a tiny chariot, six-in-hand,
Came the prince to the garden gate.

I was reading some volume of ancient lore,
By the library window, cushioned deep
In the sofa pillows, when, peeping o'er
The balcony, half asleep,

I beheld his highness, in cap and plume,
Mounting the wide, white marble stairs;
And the folding-doors of the purple room
Swung open unawares.

The wavy curtains across the door,
The Cupids upholding the ebony piers,
In the mirror glistened aslant the floor,
'Neath the wine-colored chandeliers

Of the spacious parlors, with broidered amber
Of cushioned chair, in the damask room,
Where the dancers danced to the tinkling tambour
And flute, in the violet gloom.

And the quaint old group, in the banquet hall,
Of satyrs crowning the god divine,
Was wakened to life, on the damask wall,
By the gurgling of amber wine.

And two by two, with their courtly talk,
In shimmer of silk, and cloth of gold,
The guests, by many a winding walk,
Strolled through the forest old.

But where was the princess, the pale, sweet flower,
Of whom in the dusk, by the sunset sea,
The bluebird sang, in the donjon tower,
Such a strange, weird melody?

And was I a-dreaming all the time?
Did the prince pass by with her sisters twain,
Of whom 'twas rehearsed, in prose or rhyme,
That they loved and loved in vain?

The roses drooped in their royal splendor,
And the fairy flute of the nightingale
Plaintively piped in a music tender,
Up from the leafy vale.

The sky was aglow with its sunset tints,
As I saw, through the tremulous, leafy wold,
The turrets tall of the fairy prince,
Bannered in green and gold.

And up through the winding, woodland shade
To a melody sweet of the long ago,
Ever the plumes of the cavalcade
Waved brightly to and fro.

So I stole away from my hiding-place,
And slyly peered through the postern wall;
And lo! Cinderella, in sad disgrace,
Was pacing the gloomy hall!

And high overhead the melody rang,
So faint and far was the silence stirred,
That the boisterous shout and the wine-cups' clang
Of the revelry scarce were heard.

And she who was fairest in all the land,
The pride of the palace, the slave of the cot,
Was doomed too soon, at her lover's hand,
To suffer and be forgot.

To toil and to spin by the fireside, since
A time when she thought her fortunes mended,
For one of her sisters had wed the prince,
Ere the honeymoon was ended!

THE HERDSMAN OF BAIAE.

O days that were rich with romance and with song,
When prophets of old in their wisdom sung
Of men who were sinewy limbed and strong,
And gods who were great when the world was young!
We lean to your columns that stand by the main,
Those voiceless but eloquent preachers to man;
And they tell us the same sad story again
That has ever been told since the world began!

Fair Italy! clime of the palm and the vine
Of the far blue sky and the purple sea;
Thou sunset province of temple and shrine
What meed of praise can we bring to thee?
Thy ruins are marshaled on plains and heights
Lifting shields that are shattered by ruthless Time,
As he rides with the cohorts of days and nights,
And smites to the dull earth works sublime.

I.

"Ave Imperator,
Morituri salutamus!"

'Twas the classic age of romances,
And the moon, with a glimmer of gold,
Had shattered its silver lances
On the sea-gates, white and cold,
Of the far-famed city of Baiae,
The fairest of all, and the best
Of the summer resorts to the Roman,
And the people of fair Pompéii.
For she charmed with the charm of a woman,
And lifted a face to the west,
With a hand clenched firm for a foeman,
But an open palm for a guest.

It was carnival night of Vesta.
In the emperor's grand saloon
A gladiatorial festa
Had finished the afternoon.
And athletes of well-won glory,
And brawny of limb and bold,
Had gathered to tell their story
Of many a contest old.
Centurion, soldier, and priest,
Were bacchantes, all at the feast,
In the glare of the rising moon ;
And they emptied the golden liquor,
And the wine from the white, carved beaker,
In bumpers a-bead to the brim.
But the roar of their mirth and laughter
Had scarce for a moment ceased,
When up rose one thereafter,
Who had boasted his deeds of danger,
And called for the captive stranger,
Who stood in the archway dim.

Large-limbed like a mighty giant,
But rude as a herdsman dressed,
He had entered the town, defiant
Of the lordliest and the best.
A captive, true, but no Roman
Had sought to be his foeman,
Or to speak him word of jest,
Or to laugh at his coarse attire,
For his dark face glowed with ire,
And he strode with such heavy tread,
As he crossed the pavement o'er
To the table, that overhead
The great lamps shook and quivered,
And a proffered cup he shivered
Into fragments on the floor!

Then the wine-cups, half uplifted,
Of the guests were slowly shifted
Aside on the board of oak;
And no man dared, for dread,
But to gaze on the mighty figure,
Drawn tense with a godlike vigor,
And the poise of the massive head.

For, like clouds that are torn and rifted
By the lightning's rapid stroke,
His eyes flashed fire, uplifted
To the swordsmen, as he spoke :

"Ye are here in your pride assembled,
And ye come of a stalwart race ;
But know ye, that all have trembled,
Who have met me face to face.
Ye plan for the beasts to spare me
To-morrow, at set of sun ;
But I think there is none to dare me
To add to his laurels, one !

"Think ye I fear your anger ?
Or the lift of a threatening head ?
Or accept your lordly languor
For aught but a foeman's dread ?
Ye have gathered with song and story,
When your cruel sports are done ;
But ye dare not, with all your glory,
To add to your laurels, one !"

Nor seemed the captive stranger,
As he stood with lifted head,
In spite of the chains that bound him,
In spite of the men around him,
To breathe aught else but danger,
In the hot, fierce words he said.
So they sat stone-still, and eyed him
With a stern but startled stare,
But dared not once deride him,
Or mock at his challenge there.
Until, in the hush succeeding
The stranger's words, arose
One famed for his strength and daring,
And proud in his noble bearing,
Who had won his laurels, leading
His legion against his foes.
Rose Alcys, thus defending
His friends, in an angry strain :

"Blades red with the blood of swordsmen
Are passports to yon plain,
And not the hands of a herdsman,

Made brown by the constant tending
Of sheep, on the broad campaign.
But list! I will grant you the favor,
To-morrow, at set of sun,
If your courage do not waver,
To add to *my* laurels, one!"

Burned the stranger's face with anger,
At these words so proudly said,
And fell, with an angry clangor,
His chains, that were snapt like thread!
"Beware!"—as their bright swords glistened,
In a glance of the rising moon.
Said the captive, "I have listened
To the words of yon braggart hero,
Whose defiance I think that Nero
Will repent ere the morrow's noon!"

He turned, and each guest, from wonder
At his strength, had stayed his sword.
And he strode to the far rotunda,
And bending his tall form under,
Passed out—and they spake no word.

II.

The summer sun through the arches
Of the amphitheater shone
On the polished marble stone,
And the tall Corinthian porches
Of Nero's splendid throne.
And loud was the din of voices,
Impatient for the strife,
As the heart of a mob rejoices,
When the first sharp cry is uttered,
And through the set teeth muttered
Is the growl for a human life.
There were faces lit with gladness
From Pompéii, and from Rome,
And captives wrought to madness,
And those who turned in sadness
To their vine-clad hills at home,
When arose the Emperor Nero,
And ordered the cruel game
That should seal the fate of a hero
To die a death of shame.

Now Glaucus and Orsena,
Strong-thewed and stern of face,
Had met in the wide arena,
Mid the shouts of the populace!
Steel clashed in their fierce endeavor,
By the sharp, quick pass and ward,
To triumph now or never,
To achieve a world's regard.

* * * * *

Blood flowed as the combat lengthened,
And the shouts of the people rose,
And rang to the echo strengthened
At the dying athlete's throes.
Brave Glaucus reeled, and sinking,
As his dauntless spirit fled,
On the sands that were slowly drinking
His blood, lay prone and dead.

Fast by the high suggestus
Stood Nero, looking down
On his slaves of the sword and cestus,
To whom, with an angry frown,

He said : "Bring forth Mauritius,
Great Alcys and Varretius,
And strip them for the fray ;
For I deemed the brave Orsena
Had coped in this arena
With a mightier man than they."

Now thrice had Alcys triumphed
In the contests nobly won,
And turned, as across the threshold
Fell the rays of the setting sun.
When, amid the applause, a stranger,
Full fronting the swordsman, stood
With an air that boded danger,
And a visage stern and rude ;
Aside he flung his tabard,
To breast the foeman's steel,
And drew from his leathern scabbard,
His blade with a warrior's zeal.

No swordsman like Orsena
Is yon contestant now,

But one who, single handed
With thrice his number banded,
To meet in the broad arena,
Hath made a solemn vow.
Then arose a cry of wonder
At the herdsman's first mad stroke,
Which at once with its blow asunder
The steel of Alcys broke,
Who, backward borne, fell under
The crash, like a smitten oak !

"Who comes with such front defiant,
And soul that knows no fear,
To meet a foe reliant
On finding justice here?"
Thus Nero, while a pallor
His features overspread.
"We'll test this fellow's valor !
Let the wild beasts loose !" he said.

Back swung the iron gateway,
And hushed was the clamor then,

As with starven fury straightway
Leaped the tigers from their den.
Firm stood the stranger, grasping
With firmer hand his blade,
And his target closer clasping,
Ere the deadly leap was made.
But need was there none of daring;
The beasts shrank back with fear,
With the men a terror sharing,
Who were bravest athletes here.
Shrank, trembling, nor dared to meet him,
So that all with amazement stared,
And rose with shouts to greet him,
As one whom the gods had spared!

Then spake the mighty hero,
As the twilight shadows fell:
"Listen, O haughty Nero,
And mark my counsel well.
Though I came with front unbending,
Or with hands made brown by tending

My herds by mead or moss,
Throughout thy proud dominions,
There is none of all thy minions
Who would dare my path to cross ! "
When spake the royal master
From his throne, in quick reply :
" Do you seek to court disaster,
And a Nero's arm defy ?
Back ! By the gods I swear it,
Like a dog this day you die ! "

Not well did he heed the danger,
Or his words had not been said,
For the sword of the mighty stranger,
As the guardsmen sprang behind him,
Smote, ere their hands could bind him,
The bravest of them dead !

Now hearts were filled with terror,
And cheeks were blanched with fear,
And well might Nero falter
At the scene before him here !

For the herdsman stood triumphant,
Transfigured, grandly tall,
With brazen targe unrifted,
By the fray, and sword uplifted,
The mightiest of them all!

"Though you sought my soul to cower,
And my courage to decry,
Behold, I scorn your power,
And your royal might defy!
And mark me, haughty Nero,
Prince, Emperor, as you will,
I stand not here a hero,
To belie your strength, or skill.
But I came this day to meet you,
With thrice a foeman's odds,
And in humble garb to teach you
That your games offend the gods!"

He spake, and by arch and portal
The mighty concourse fled;

"Of all the gods immortal,
It is Hercules!" they said.
With faces blanched, uplifted,
They madly hurried all,
For the huge walls, rent and rifted,
Were tottering to their fall!
The great earth groaned and trembled,
And flying, still the first
Of those at the games assembled
The pale king fled accurst!
And they turned with a look of wonder,
And called to the gods in vain,
As the huge pile swayed asunder,
And crashed on the darkened plain!

CASTILIAN.

WHAT is her beauty like—something fair
As a sea-nymph under her yellow hair?
Or dark like a black-eyed southern maid
A-doze in her hammock beneath the shade?
Do you sit, with the moonlight over your shoulder
Full in her face, while your heart grows bolder,
And you laughingly prison her soft white hand,
With the scent of the rose through the lattice fanned?

I can see you climbing the stairway white
In the old, old castle, at home, to-night;
While the sun, just setting, enchants your hall
With an amber glow over arch and wall.

The ancient tower is clad with vines
That half reach over the quaint designs
Of the carven window, through which you gaze
On the old, old scenes of your childhood days.
And I fancy you wandering down the court
Where the fountain-dragon still spouts in sport,
The rainbows flitting across the spray
Of the marble basin the livelong day.

The silken curtains and cedarn doors
Swing loftily over the inlaid floors;
And steps with a golden balustrade
Lead down to the lawn in the checkered shade.
And the fair one dwells 'mid the cactus blooms
In her own wide hall, while her love consumes
Her heart, as she toys with her jeweled fan,
While dreamily couched on a silk divan
Amid sandal odors; and a wavy hue
Of pink and delicious tints gleam through
The foamy folds of her fleecy gown;
And her large eyes, shaded with lashes brown,
Are aglow in the dusk, as I see you there
Carelessly greeting your lady fair.

And now as you stand by the terrace wall,
While the moonbeams over the sea-waves fall,
And she leans on your shoulder with tender grace,
And archly looks in your shaded face,
And your lips——
May never life's trouble annoy,
While your Castle in Spain is a dream to enjoy.

LLEWELLYN.

The moon, with its dainty, tremulous fingers,
Was parting the linden's tresses dark,
As I wandered down through court and garden
Of old Llewellyn park.

I could see a shadow upon the terrace,
Could hear the fountain's plashy drip,
Where Neptune lifted a golden chalice
Unto his bearded lip.

And about the quaint old porch and towers
A solemn silence held the gloom ;
For here, they said, was the haunted mansion,
And Guy Llewellyn's tomb !

I pushed aside the faded curtain
That flapped before a Gothic hall,
I passed by many a gloomy chamber,
I pierced the oaken wall.

I came at last to the donjon tower;
An oak tree groaned, it was midnight 'most,
And I knew in that hollow moonlit chamber
Was Guy Llewellyn's ghost!

Upon the pavement the rust had fallen
From off his iron coat of mail,
While out of a chink in his hollow visor
There dropped a mouse's tail.

A rattling wind from the grated casement
Swung back the door with a sudden gust,
And down on the floor, like a sigh escaping,
There slipped a mound of dust!

I cannot now for my life remember
Whether I ran with a frightened scream,
Or whether—indeed I cannot tell you—
Maybe 'twas all a dream.

POOR OLD RALPH.

"You never have heard the merry laughter,
When coming home from the busy street,
Of Flora, romping and running after
Old Bruno there, with his clumsy feet!
The darlingest bright-eyed little lady
That ever flaunted a golden curl!
Why, here by the gate, through the garden shady,
You must have beheld my little girl.

"Her dimpled cheeks, like sunny roses,
Half hid by the hat that was ribboned down,
Would blush for the love that in trust reposes
Under her lashes silken-brown.

Do you see her face at the window yonder,
White and thin through the curls of gold?
She is smiling sweet—but her feet will wander
Down to the churchyard still and cold!

"Down to the churchyard, through the grasses,
The daisies nod by the southern wall,
The birds sing sweetly as she passes,
The breezes whir in the pine tree tall,
The cuckoo flowers in love lean over
To kiss her dainty hands and feet,
And fainting sunbeams, over the clover,
Race with the yellow-bearded wheat.

"Hither she comes with her flowers faded,
Of white mossroses and calla sprays,
Out and in with her tresses braided,
Just as she seemed in the olden days.
And now she has flitted away in the shadow
Down in the garden beyond the brook,
Laughingly over the hazy meadow,
Away to the churchyard's quiet nook!

"Ah! for the days that we played together,
The first five years, in a glad content;
When over the fields, through the bloom and heather,
In shadow and shine we came and went!
Nor ever a thought of the churchyard willow,
Bowing its sleek hair over the dead,
Came to her heart, as she sought her pillow,
Clasping her wee hands there by the bed!

"But still you will see her upon the morrow;
(So strange that she hastened away to-day.)
You know I am growing old, though sorrow
Has touched but lightly my locks with gray.
The birds are singing; my love, my darling,
Is faintly replying good-night to all;
And the wren, the robin, and sweet-voiced starling
Have flown away to the churchyard wall!"

THE PHANTOM SCHOONER.

Over the west lay the tortuous track
Of a huge cloud shape streaked yellow and black ;
And just at the edge of the sky was a sail,
That rocked in the wake of the evening gale.
Down on the beach were the sand-trailed nets
That the fishers had pulled where the white sea frets
The smooth-worn beach ; and the crystal sand
Had the print of the boats that had left the land.

The rain all day from the dappled birch
Had dripped on the tiles of Southport church ;
And in zigzag course, by the roadside down
To the beach, ran streams that were muddy brown ;
While low to the waves was the gray-ribbed rack,
All day, and the east wind pushing back ;

But still you could see, on the wave-wet sand,
Where the boats had slid as they left the land.

But the night set in with just a break
In the dull gray clouds, while the glimmering wake
Where the strange craft rocked, and that pale streak there,
Were signs that the morrow would open fair.
Then a drizzling rain came on apace,
And many a sad soul through the place
Heard the greedy waves as they lapped the sand
On the spot where the boats had left the land.

Some heard the sound with a sob, and some
With a sudden shriek as if death had come.
And well would it be were there such relief
When human hearts are rent with grief !
Brave men to the seas had sailed alone,
And their nets were left on the wave-worn stone,
And for yon strange craft, through the yielding sand
They had pushed their boats as they left the land.

There to the west they had seen it oft,
A full-rigged craft with its flag aloft

At certain times, and 'twas said by the wise
That clouds would change, and that winds would rise,
When that swift storm-schooner stood west at sea ;
But the young men laughed in mockery
At the old men's words, and down the sand
They guided their boats, and left the land.

The storm-wind rattled latch and hasp,
It tangled the birch-boughs in its grasp,
Wrenching the branches along the eaves
Of Southport church 'neath the sighing leaves
And many a window a sad face pressed,
Looking over the waves to the far-off west,
Far over the tract of the sea-beach sand,
Where the fishermen pushed their boats from land.

It was hard on midnight, when o'er the sea
The schooner loomed up sullenly !
And without a trace of the missing crew
The boats of the fishermen came in view,

Each overturned in the rocking waves,
Where the brave lads found their ocean graves,
On that sorrowful day when down the sand
They gallantly pushed their boats from land!

BONNY BELLE.

The spider has woven his silken bridge,
And swung it across the walk,
And high on the sea-beat slated ridge
The bittern and heron stalk.
The sun went down but an hour ago
In the glow of the crimson west,
And floating afar in a dreamy glow
Is the moon with its purple crest.

The grove, and the garden, the castle tall,
With its turrets old and brown,
Are illumined to-night for the festival
By the ocean beyond the town.

The waxen lights from their crystals glance,
Reflecting the scene below,
While merry folk in the mazy dance
Are gliding to and fro.

There is none so fair of the brilliant throng
As the fair-eyed Bonny Belle ;
A year ago you could hear her song
Come echoing down the dell.
She is sad to-night, and her splendid hair
Droops heavy in waves of gold,
But her lustrous eyes so strangely glare
And daze with a charm untold !

Ah ! white as the driven snow her face,
Death-white for her British pride.
There was one, you know, in our little place,
Who loved her until he died !
Lilies and roses are blooming low
In the garden beneath the trees,
But violets, faded a year ago,
Are dearer to her than these.

She is leaning over the lattice-edge,
And her heart its treasure craves;
The music floats by the garden hedge,
But memories crowd its waves.
And the past comes back in a mournful dream,
As she sits in the moonlight dim,
And the opening gates of her heaven gleam
A moment in vision of him!

SHADOWS.

Shadows are climbing under the leaves,
Shadows are running across the wheat,
As a patient weaver sits and weaves,
Shadows toil in the lazy heat.
Across the pavement and down the walk
You can see the curious shadows stalk,
Dancing lightly across the floor,
Tumbling over the garden wall,
Chasing the sunshine through the door,
And out again by the open hall.

Shadows are weaving a net of gold,
All in a group beneath the trees.
Down in the depths of the forest old
Shadows are thick as swarming bees.

Now through the grass of the meadow lot,
Where the sun was glaring fierce and hot
But a moment ago, the shadows race
  Swiftly over the stubble now,
Cooling the horse's weary face,
  And fanning the farmer's heated brow.

Shadows are swinging across the creek,
  As the mill-wheel turns in the cooling tide.
Shadows are playing hide and seek
  In the hemlock boughs by the water side.
And, stealing over the workshop floor,
Shadows are telling of rest in store,
Cheering the toil of the August days,
  Lifting the heart to its task again,
Chasing behind the clouds the rays,
  And pushing over the summer rain.

Shadows are riding the restless breeze,
  And trembling away from the angry heat ;
Crouching under the waving trees,
  And rushing forth from their safe retreat ;

Bringing relief, on the dusty road,
To the traveler sinking beneath his load.
Shadows are cooling the heated air,
  Swaying with breezes to and fro ;
Shadows are busy everywhere,
  In the sky above and the earth below.

Shadows are forming against the wall
  Of the lordly mansion in martial lines ;
Shadows are bending their figures tall,
  And toiling under the cottage vines.
In at the window to cheer the maid,
Out in the bustling marts of trade,
Shadows wend as the daylight wanes ;
  And over the church-spires of the town,
Peering in through the window-panes,
  Shadows wait till the sun goes down.

IMPANELING A JURY.

An awful deed, I'm told, was done to-day,
And Justice winked and let her balance fall;
A dozen men—good, honest men, they say—
Were drawn and quartered in the City Hall.

THE RUSSIAN BALL.

I.

To Tammany Terrace, above Broadway,
Some years ago—so their neighbors say—
From their cottage in Spuyten Duyvil,
The Lifkinses came, on an autumn day,
In a coach and four, with their footman gay,
And an air so lofty and *recherché*,
As only a prince could rival.

The people wondered and stared and talked,
And whether the Lifkinses rode or walked,
They led in the whirl of fashion;

Their marble mansion was white and cold,
But its blaze of light and its glitter of gold
At night spoke volumes of wealth untold,
And of pride as a ruling passion.

John Lifkins, honest—as honesty goes—
Made carpets of texture as fine as those
In any bazar at Brussels;
In a palace now (it was once a farm)
His dinners were famous, cooked to a charm,
And he prided himself on his strength of arm,
His oysters and other mussels.

But gold and flowers,
And yachts and bowers,
And fountains of perfumed water,
And cellars filled with the choicest wines,
And, were he possessed of Golconda's mines,
He would give up all, for the love of one—
"The darlingest creature under the sun"—
As he called his stylish daughter.

Of late this lady, in spite of *fête*,
Abjured society, sat up late,
Refused all callers, and in this state
Told suitors to go to—Texas.
Indeed, Miss Lifkins, without a care
For *fête* or fol-de-rol, here or there,
Was worried to death over what to wear
At the ball to the Duke Alexis.

Piled to the ceiling in rich array,
In the damask room of the mansion, lay,
In the most forlorn confusion,
Silks that crinkled and gleamed with gold ;
Bright brocades of a Tyrian fold ;
Shawls from Arabia ; velvets, too,
That came from the Orient; laces new
And fine as gossamer ; jewels rare
Flashed into flame on couch and chair,
And all united the charm and air
Of the most complete illusion.

Time flew apace.
The days of grace

Allotted to seamstress, servants, and maids,
To shape the silks, and to match the shades,
Were very nearly ended.
And, grand as a princess of Ispahan,
From sparkling slipper to jeweled fan,
Robed in the costliest satin and lace,
Miss Lifkins, in person a queen of grace,
In fancy the ball attended.

II.

Jim Briggs and Alexis!
Of course it perplexes
The guileless reader to find the clue
That brings Mr. Briggs into prominent view
With our royal guest, and unites the two
In so close a poetic relation;
But it's plain the reader ought to be made
To understand the plot that was laid,
The particular Tammany business trade,
The kind of tribute the father paid
For his daughter's exaltation.

As a ward politician
Jim held a commission
As henchman true of a Tammany chief,
Though his regular business was that of a thief;
But a venture failed, and he came to grief:
He was caught *in flagrante delictu.*
So Jim was jugged for his little whim
That all loose trifles belonged to him,
For the "peelers" were sharp, and they went for Jim,
And the man they go for they stick to.

And now a delicate problem arose;
For the proof was as plain as the very nose
On the face of the Judge—it was red as a rose—
And Jim, in his ward, as the story goes,
Was a fellow of great signif'cance.
If the Judge was to set the prisoner clear,
It was plain the complainant mustn't appear.
So he counted the thing on his fingers' ends;
"Arrah! who are this blasted complainant's frinds?"
And at once he bethought him of Lifkins.

So Lifkins was seen, and his Honor agreed
If complainant was mum, and the prisoner freed,
That he'd go to a man—in a whisper—and *he'd*
Got hold ('twas a little affair of a deed)
Of a man that the biggest had toasted and tea-ed
(Mr. Lifkins himself had a hold upon Tweed),
And he thought that this couldn't help but succeed
"In bagging the Russian Committee."
So the thing was done and Jim went free,
And the hand of Alexis is given in fee
To Justice slighted in mockery.
"So, so," says Lifkins, "so, so," says he,
"If a man of my business capacity
Should find himself unable to tree
Your Mr. Alexis from over the sea,
It would certainly be a pity!"

III.

Such a flash of lights on the avenue!
Such a fuss and flutter and great ado!
Such a haste and hurry and hullabaloo
On the night of the grand ovation!

There were carriages stamped with a coronet,
And liveried footmen as black as jet,
And folks from abroad whom the *Court Gazette*
Extolled for their lofty station.

But who shall attempt to describe the hall?
Its cost in adornment of floor and wall
Was never equaled. The Russian Ball
Was high on a gorgeous level.
Aladdin's palace could scarce compare,
Or Haidee's home, with the brilliant glare
Of the lights that shone for Alexis there
On the night of the Russian revel.

Tropical flowers,
And cooling showers
From perfumed water, refreshed the soul.
But, to draw it mild, as we must, the whole
Of the dazzling picture was all that Claude,
In the Lady of Lyons, or Tennyson's Maud
Could need to be contented.

But all the ladies in foam and lace,
In finish of fashion and flush of grace,
Of the daughter of Lifkins, of Tammany Place,
With envy were half demented.

In a whirl of splendor the waltzers glide
In voluptuous measure ; on every side
There are eyes that follow with joy and pride
The Duke and the lady with him.
And the daughter of Lifkins, the honored one !
Was ever a woman under the sun
So blessed or happy ? Indeed there was none
In annals of prose or rhythm.

Too soon, alas !
Did the moments pass.
And Miss Lifkins, the center of bells and beaux,
Was flattered, praised, and admired by those
Less fortunate ones who'd have given all
To dance with the Duke at the Russian Ball,
Or even to touch his raiment.

* * * * * *

And now we say, and we hold it true,
Success is certain, whatever you do,
If you're sharp and can manage a handsome trade,
And can offer goods that were never made
To your city for audit and payment.

For Lifkins honest—as honesty goes—
Cajoled the rulers, and governed those
Who make their mark by repeated blows
In Tammany rows and tussles.
And thus the grandest results ensue ;
There's nothing a man is unable to do
If he wins the ear of the crafty crew,
Like honest Lifkins—although they knew
He was hoggish and raised his brussels.

For wealth will win
If leagued with sin ;
And people will bow to the golden calf,
And meekly tolerate rogues who laugh
At the ignorant masses, and regulate half
Of society, rank, and fashion ;

So "it's dimes and dollars, and dollars and dimes,"
For the honest man must live betimes,
Though the rounds of the ladder on which he climbs
Are knaveries, frauds, deceits, and crimes,
And envy and hate and passion.

OUR RIFLE TEAM.

(Delmonico's, September 6, 1875.)

The festal hall right merrily is decked with banners bright,
The green and gold upon the left, the star-flag on the right,
And proudly swells the music, and pleasant does it seem
To welcome home again to-night our famous rifle team.

And there are pyramids of grape that glow with ruddy flame,
Gunpowder from the canisters, and brace and stock of game;
And many a barrel held in stock is sighted all in line
By servants trained at will to draw a bead upon the wine.

The loaded mussels gleam in view, huge pears come in by fours,
The apples with their rival pits cling stoutly to their cores;
The rest—well, for a hundred yards, the targets brightly gleam
With choicest stores of viands for our famous rifle team.

And Gildersleeve the story told, with modesty and grace,
How old Reliable lay down and fired on his face;
How 'twixt his knees grave Fulton hit the target full and fair,
And Coleman jauntily reached out and struck the target square.

How Yale with sharp precision doubled up along the ground
And bored the center with a cheer that made the plain resound.
And Dakin, true of heart and hand—it seems almost a dream—
Scored bull's-eye after bull's-eye for our famous rifle team.

Then he toasts the noble Irishmen whose nerve and skill had won
And set the green above the red at far-famed Wimbledon ;
He tells of fair Killarney's lakes, of banquets here and there,
Of the kissing of the Blarney Stone, and of the colleens fair.

And every banqueter leaps up to drink the toast of toasts—
To the green old isle of Erin, the most generous of hosts !
Then Ireland's songs are proudly sung, and pleasant does it seem
To welcome home again to-night our famous rifle team.

THE STATUE.

Push back the vines ; the moon to-night
Is peeping through the leafy lattice,
And, sweetly smiling in the light,
Behold the dainty figure white
Of Echo, yonder, gazing at us !

(Echo *loquitur*.)

" Do these recall the days bygone,
The terrace urns, and hanging flowers,
The winding walks, the sloping lawn,
The park, the deer, the timid fawn,
The pillared porches and the towers ?

"What splendid triumphs you have seen,
You charming bit of pique and malice,
Within these halls, *ma belle* Nadine,
Where people recognize you queen,
And throng the chambers of the palace!

"Behold, in yonder wide saloon,
The swift pink robe and glances tender
Of lord and lady, where the moon
On velvet cloak and flashing shoon
Has slanted through the waving splendor.

"Keen blades are crossed by flash of eyes,
Bright pennons wave in coyish laughter,
And cavaliers in smiles or sighs
Pursue the foe whose badge they prize,
While rival knights ride boldly after!

"You heard the Percys were *blasées*,
Whose beauty, spite of any reason,
Was once the topic of the day?
Ah, yes—they faded quite away,
Like butterflies when out of season.

"But stay! why did the duchess praise
The song to-night your husband sung us?
'Tis she whose sly, coquettish ways
So charmed the duke of *ennuyees*,
The most determined bore among us.

"I saw your husband gaily twine
And kiss, despite her sweet confusion,
Her hair so like to golden wine,
Where through the oriel window shine
Such foamy folds of white illusion.

"I heard his cadenced love-words flow
So like the language of a poet;
Her bosom sweet was heaving low,
And, too, her white hands trembled so—
But prythee, does my lady know it?

"But so it goes—Oh! I can tell
Such news, such gossip, and such scandal!
You see I'm Echo—all a shell—
Plaster of Paris—scan me well—
I'm hollow down, from crown to sandal!"

So I've been nodding here beside
The window while my lord reposes!
So vexed I am, I could have cried,
And yonder statue seeks to hide
Its laughter in among the roses!

INTO THE LIGHT.

If no hereafter,
Then why the sorrow, the cruel pain,
The bitter thoughts, and the silent tears,
The lifelong yearning of useless years,
If no hereafter
To bring us the friends of our youth again?

For a little while,
And the rose will fall by the garden bed;
The life of the oak, grown still and old,
Will flutter away in leaves of gold,
For a little while,
Till another summer has touched the dead.

Through many a day,
The soul is seeking a region wide,
Descending a mountain-path alone,
Stumbling in turn o'er brier and stone,
Through many a day,
While the sun shines bright on the other side.

Where the golden gates
Of the sky are open, and shining through,
Is the clear soft light of a summer day,
That is melting the gloomy shades away,
Where the golden gates
Are flooding with light the dreamy blue.

And looking through tears,
Will the sunbeams break into rainbow form ;
And the smile return to the grief-worn face,
And the heart will assume its old-time grace ;
And looking through tears,
Will the clouds depart of a summer storm.

HOMESPUN.—A FRAGMENT.

Yon cross-roads, where the tavern stood of yore,
With creaking sign above the welcome door,
No longer form the center of a town
Of quaint simplicity and old renown.
The country store, in boyhood's days so still,
That from its porch we heard, beyond the hill,
The drowsy tinklings of the fleecy fold,
Is but a memory grown dim and old.
No longer where the schoolhouse stood are seen
The urchins playing on the village green ;
Nor, sidling near the open door, you find
The tardy lad of hesitating mind.
The church is standing by the winding brook,
But wears no more its old familiar look ;

A gilded vane now tops the spire, and seems
To catch the sunset of our boyish dreams.
Again I seem to hear, across the way,
The scythe's hoarse ring through meadows sweet with hay,
Where slopes the hill, across whose foot-worn pass
To trip the men we tied the twisted grass.

The shaded stream, within whose waters cool,
As boys we bathed in play-hours after school,
Now winds its slow length round each rocky ridge
That once lay deep beneath the covered bridge.
The farmhouse stood on yonder hill, amid
Luxuriant vines, and with its roof half hid
By oaks through whose cool foliage the breeze
Would lull the sense like sound of summer seas.
How oft amid the old haunts have we strayed,
Marked well each shaded hill and sunlit glade,
Romped through the halls or 'neath the chestnut tree,
Played at our games with all an urchin's glee!

Here stood the district school-house, and the lane
Wound yonder, past the fields of waving grain.

And there, the orchard, where full well we knew
The tree whereon the biggest apples grew.
Here was the path, beside the favorite swing,
That led unto the bubbling hillside spring;
And here the woods, where oft we sought with zest
The chipmunk's haunt, and many a robin's nest.
The master, bowed by studious midnight toil,
Whose scowl made e'en the stoutest lad recoil,
High at his desk, his copy-lines to fill,
Seems slowly measuring each sentence still;
While through the window slants the sunshine warm
Where sleepy urchins lounge about the form,
With dog-eared spelling-books, whose drowsy words
Grow drowsier with the far-off chirp of birds.
And wearily the hanging map is scanned,
Where voyages to foreign ports are planned,
Till, from some pleasant dream, with sudden bound
The heart-throbs quicken at the ferule's sound.

THE VAMPIRE.

Ah ! she is so wondrous fair,
So queenly and wise in her way !
Though her terrible tongue, they say,
From its poisonous, deadly lair
When it crouches will strike and slay,
Before you are aware !

Her terrible love endures
For a season brief and gay.
To wait on her night and day
She has a hundred wooers
Who worship her eyes, they say ;
But should she fasten her lips on yours,
She would drain your heart away !

MOONLIGHT ON THE WATER.

I.

THROUGH crystal peaks
Of the moonlit ocean,
The phantom hosts
Break into motion ;
Bright are the banners gaily swinging ;
List to the music sweetly ringing !
Over the waves
The bugles calling ;
Hark to the echoes
Faintly falling !

II.

Far to the north,
From icy regions,
Glitter the ranks
Of the viking legions.

Snow-white plumes in the distance dancing,
Bright blue spears in the moonlight glancing,
Over the waves
The falchions gleaming,
Long snow-beards
In the cool wind streaming.

III.

Up from the south,
Graceful and tender,
Steeds are prancing
In martial splendor.
Moonlit lines to the left deploying,
Troops to the right in turn annoying,
Over the waves
Quick flashes sending,
The cannons' roar
In the distance blending!

IV.

Out from the east,
Through gleaming arches,
With waving crescent
An army marches.

Jeweled turbans are gaily flashing,
Hoofs of the steeds in the moonlight splashing ;
Over the waves,
In the water twinkling,
Bells in the breeze
Are faintly tinkling !

v.

By moonlit paths
Of the purple ocean,
The phantom armies
Are all in motion.
Bright are the banners gaily swinging ;
List to the music sweetly ringing !
Over the waves
The flags are flying,
And voices faint
Are dying, dying !

THE INVISIBLE PRINCE.

A white steed champing his silver bit
At the palace porch, and a blonde-haired page
At his side are all I recall of it.

A quaint old picture it was of an age
When the round table knights were in their prime,
When the dragon banners above the walls
Of a castle swung to a golden rhyme
Of royal cheer in the grand old halls.
When the peacock basked on the sunlit height,
And the shout of the men, at coit and card,
Came drowsily up from the courtyard, bright
With caparisoned steeds in the castle yard.

I see you yet in your womanish grace,
As a child, when together we read the book,
In that olden time, with a smile on your face,
Or a doubtful stare in your troubled look.

But the story is true, for the giant old
Is the same to-day, in his halls asleep ;
And the fairy to-day as a bird has told
Where the princess is chained in the donjon keep.

Now Leander, the prince, was inclined to roam,
Ere he dwelt a year by the water blue,
And 'tis said that the evenings he spent at home
In the Island of Calm Delights were few.
For what with the palace with its treasures of gold
And its priceless jewels of every name,
There was scarcely a statue that wasn't old,
Or a fountain that didn't seem dull and tame.

So he favored the club or the grand café,
In luxurious revel, 'twixt cards and wine,
Or with Madame the duchess, after the play,
In choicest seclusion would frequently dine.
But when, in the silence of night, unawares,
The princess, transformed to a witch upon crutches,
Came hobbling alone up the moonlighted stairs,
With his cap of enchantment he whisked off the duchess.

How sad that the one you were wont to admire
Should become such a mischievous rogue at best!
But the story is vouched for, and if you desire,
While you swing in your hammock I'll tell you the rest:

There were *fêtes* without number, and parties and balls,
In the city's bright gardens that were white with the glare
Of the myriad lamps that outshone from the walls
The moonlight that fell through the foliage there;
Quaint nooks in the shrubbery, fountains aglow
With the hues of the rainbow, and music divine;
In short there was nothing omitted, you know,
That an exquisite taste could conceive or design.

Here oft of an evening Leander, arrayed
Like a proud cavalier, in a realm he was new to,
With the queens of society artlessly strayed,
Forgetful of her whom he vowed to be true to.
For a tempting arch face, that would hide in the bowers
Or peep through the ferns, in bewilderment flew
Like a bird to his heart, as a bee to the flowers,
Though who the masked beauty was nobody knew!

She flashed in the throng by the triple-arched gate
Of the palace, at times, and again in the crowd
Where the king was enthroned in magnificent state,
In the midst of his courtiers haughty and proud.
But in vain did the prince follow foolishly after ;
For the creature who thrilled him with rapture and bliss
Only fluttered her fan in his face, or with laughter
Afar would coquettishly toss him a kiss.

But once, as she passed in the glare of the lamps
On the arm of a rival, he saw with a frown
That her escort—of all of the world's wicked scamps—
Was that famous old Bluebeard of doubtful renown.
Out—out by the gate—then on to the road,
He followed post-haste till they entered a carriage,
When, donning his cap, with impatience he strode,
To prevent at the castle a runaway marriage.

Now high on the cliff from a village, the castle
Of Bluebeard looms up like a sentinel host,
Where the clatter and shout of retainer and vassal
Pierce weirdly the night like the cries of a ghost.

And out of the lone lover's window on high,
Which the villager bards have embalmed in their sonnets,
They say, when the moon is at full in the sky,
That witches look down with their cone-shaped bonnets.

Here Leander arrived, when the moon in the sea
Like a hag's white face was wrinkled and wizen,
And stood at the gates that he knew to be
The entrance, alas ! to a terrible prison,
Outside of whose walls no stories were told
Of the wives that were wedded and doomed to die,
Or the tall bell-tower, grown black and old,
Where the white shapes swing when the wind sweeps by.

Past warden and tipstaff, unseen by them all,
He slipped through the gates in his magical cap,
Pushing over the groom in the dim-lighted hall,
And refreshing the page with a vigorous rap.
So he waited the coming of Bluebeard, who seemed,
As he entered the hall of the castle in state,
Like a tiger whose eyes in the torchlight gleamed
With the passion unquenched of a terrible hate !

Now, as Bluebeard ascended the steps with his bride,
So soon to surrender her bright young life,
He tossed back the vail of the one at his side,
And disclosed the sweet face of Leander's own wife!
Then unto the maids whom he met at the door
He resigned her, and counted his keys with a sigh,
As they hung at his belt; but in counting them o'er,
He hummed an old song of a spider and fly.

Do you ask if Leander made havoc at once
With the castle and Bluebeard of famous renown?
Or rescued the lady? You dear little dunce!
'Tis a story applied to your own little town.
For the wretch, when he found that the mask was his spouse,
He fell on the neck of old Bluebeard, and wept,
And blessed him—then hurried away to carouse
In the hall where his choicest of liquors were kept!

THE OWL.

The birds had folded their wings to sleep,
And the moon was low in the west,
And an owl toohooed as two lovers wooed,
Clasped to each other's breast.
"Te-hee," said the maid—"To-who-o?" said the owl—
For their grammar was none of the best.

"And when I am sad, I will come te-hee,"
Said the maiden with eager zest;
"To who?" said the lover—"To-who-o?" said the owl—
"To you, my dearest and best."
"To-woo-o!" said the owl, as he slid away
And flew to his downy nest.

A CENTURION DYING AT THE GATES OF ROME.

HERE, beneath these Titan arches,
Where a phantom army marches,

From the Pontine meadows Romeward,
Into shadowy regions homeward,

Thou, at end of toil and trouble,
Daimon, brother, soul, and double,

As thyself from me thou freest,
Speak and tell me what thou seest,

Gazing tip-toed through the shadows,
Far into the twilight meadows;

Tell me, ere this body, bleeding,
Bids adieu to earth receding,

All thou seest, all thou knowest,
Of that land to which thou goest.

Tell me all, thou unseen Power,
Unto whom a slave I cower,

Ere the cord that binds is broken,
Ere the farewell word is spoken ;

For I hear the shouting legions
Faintly, from some far-off regions,

Whither thou, with outstretched fingers,
Cautiously, as one who lingers

In the darkness, like a stranger,
Bideth, waiting death or danger !

Oh ! the anguish, and the failing
Of that strength so unavailing !

Mine the past to-day in sorrow,
Thine the future with the morrow ;

Mine the short unfinished story,
Thine the fruits of fame and glory.

Yet at times my heart rejoices
At the lisp of childish voices,

And I see, as one that's dreaming,
Far away the village gleaming

In the twilight—life hath crowned me—
Loving arms I know are round me.

But the earth is dark and lonely,
And I feel thy presence only ;

Thou at end of pain and trouble,
Daimon, brother, soul, and double.

Bright thy face is in a vision :
Tell me, are the fields Elysian

Breaking brightly through the portal
That doth lead to life immortal ?

Silent—and the light is waning ;
All of life is past regaining.

Silent—and thou standest o'er me,
Pointing in the gloom before me.

Farewell Rome : of all your splendor
Memories linger soft and tender ;

While beneath your glorious arches
Slowly now the army marches—

Halts before this crumbling column—
Stands majestic, weird, and solemn ;

And the Night, from plain and river,
Lifts the Day to God forever.

ON THE STEPS OF THE VATICAN.

Down the broad white steps of the Vatican,
With a rat-a-tat-tat,
And the cling-clang of saber, an officer ran,
A signal to people, this way and that,
As he mounted his steed at the outer gate,
That the Pope was approaching, in solemn state,
Through the gloomy-walled rotunda.

Swiss helmet and pike in the warm light shone,
While above, to the west,
The dome of St. Peter's reflected the sun,
Like a Titan buckler upheld to the crest,
As the equipage grand to the entrance swept,
And his Holiness, blessing the people, stepped
To the coach mid a buzz of wonder.

With outriders clashing their swords at heel
In a flurry of dust,
With their waving plumes and their flashing steel,
Through swarms of the wicked, through ranks of the just,
By the roadside prone, to the Pincian Way
The coach dashed on—and the city lay
To the south in its hazy splendor.

Meadow and marsh, in the setting sun,
Through a purple mist,
Seemed in a dream as the day was done;
While the cloud-lights twinkling with amethyst
Fell athwart the church, and cathedral dome,
Arch, column, and tower of ancient Rome,
With the touch of a silence tender.

THE MYSTERY OF HEIDELBERG CASTLE.

" High and hoar on the forehead of the Jettenbühl stands the castle of Heidelberg. Behind it rise the oak-crested hills of the Geissberg and Kaiserstuhl, and in front, from the wide terrace of masonry, you can almost throw a stone upon the roofs of the town, so close do they lie beneath. Above this terrace rises the broad front of the chapel of Saint Udalrich. On the left stands the slender octagon tower of the horologue ; and on the right, a huge round tower, battered and shattered by the mace of war, shores up with its broad shoulders the beautiful palace and garden-terrace of Elizabeth, wife of Count Palatine Frederick. In the rear are olden palaces and towers, forming a vast irregular quadrangle: Rodolph's ancient castle, with its Gothic glorietta and fantastic gables; the Giant's Tower, guarding the drawbridge over the moat ; the Rent Tower, with the linden trees growing on the summit, and the magnificent Rittersaal of Otho Henry, Count Palatine of the Rhine and Grand Seneschal of the Roman Empire. From the gardens behind the castle you pass under the archway of the Giant's Tower into the great court-yard. The diverse architecture of different ages strikes the eye, and curious sculptures. In niches

on the wall of Saint Udalrich's chapel stand rows of knights in armor broken and dismembered, and on the front of Otho's Rittersaal, the heroes of Jewish history and classic fable. You enter the open and desolate chambers of the ruin, and on every side are medallions and family arms, the globe of the Empire and the golden fleece, or the eagle of the Cæsars, resting on the escutcheons of Bavaria and the Palatinate. Over the windows and doorways and chimney-pieces are sculptures and moldings of exquisite workmanship; and the eye is bewildered by the profusion of caryatides, and arabesques, and rosettes, and fan-like flutings, and garlands of fruits and flowers and acorns, and bullocks' heads with draperies of foliage, and muzzles of lions holding rings in their teeth. The cunning hand of art was busy for six centuries in raising and adorning these walls; the mailed hands of time and war have defaced and overthrown them in less than two. Next to the Alhambra of Granada, the castle of Heidelberg is the most magnificent ruin of the middle ages."—LONGFELLOW'S *Hyperion.*

THE MYSTERY OF HEIDELBERG CASTLE.

"Ich weiss einen Helden von seltener Art,
Das ist die Blume der Ritterschaft."

Der Ritter vom Rheine.

I.

What mean those lights that fret the leafy wood?
And whence the melody that softly falls
To-night from yonder dusky solitude,
Where bats are flitting round the castle walls
Of Heidelberg, the while the cuckoo calls
Its mate, awakened from a slumber warm?
Behold ye not the shapes that haunt the halls
That once entranced the soul with all the charm
Of minstrelsy and rout, and many a grand alarm?

II.

The moon has flung its banners on the sward ;
The tall oaks sentinel the avenue ;
Above, the cloud-host marshaled hitherward
Have pitched their white tents on a field of blue.
The ruined castle rises to the view,
Like some old giant warden, peering far
Into the distant shades, while, glimmering through
His wind-blown mantle, faintly shines a star ;
And seemingly plumed knights in dusky coverts are.

* * * * * *

III.

Whence came the Lady Marian none could tell ;
Of all the town no soul could name the day
When first she came to Heidelberg. Full well
They loved her gentle face and winning way,
Albeit there was that, as they would say,
About her mood and mien, and strange dark eyes,
Which made them fain believe her mind astray
Through love, or what not ; 'twould be overwise,
They said, to question that which no one could surmise.

IV.

They knew she loved to wander at her will
About the castle halls, or sit for hours
Upon the balcony with lute, until
They called her the Pale Lady of the Towers.
An aged man who owned vast vintage bowers,
Old Rupert named, alone of all the rest
She most esteemed, for he had brought her flowers
To wreathe her tresses, and made manifest
His sympathy for her, in many ways expressed.

V.

The porter sprawled beside the castle stair,
And dreamed of lordly banquets, waving plumes,
The graceful tilt of lances 'thwart the air,
And knights in armor gliding through the rooms.
For much his senses were oppressed with fumes
Of rare old Burgundy and Rhenish wine,
So that he mumbled, in the cloistered glooms,
About a Black Knight of the Palatine,
And in his dreams unhorsed some champion of the Rhine.

VI.

Upon this night old Rupert past him slips,
By empty niche and moss-grown flag, alone,
And glides, with cautious finger on his lips,
Through gloomy labyrinths that scarce are known,
And up broad steps of deftly chiseled stone,
Unto a door arched o'er with figures quaint,
Through which the warm light tremulously shone,
And ventured in, with timid step and faint,
Past carven prince and priest, and many a statued saint.

VII.

Beside an oriel window, where the moon
Aflame hath set a shield and silver lance,
Pale Marian sings, and weaves to tinkling tune
Of lute, some madrigal of old romance.
The pendent lamplight doth the eye entrance
With violet broiderie, and argent fold
Of arabesque, and nymphs that eye askance
Their marble limbs ; with armor quaint and old
Upon the oaken walls, and banners fringed with gold.

VIII.

Aloft, droop broken crests with figures grim ;
And shields, that once were bossed with jewels bright,
Now red with rust, slant from the arches dim,
To tell of sieges, wars, and many a fight
In tournament. For these did cheer the sight
Of gentle Marian, whose wandering mind
In every shadow saw a noble knight ;
And so old Rupert, happening to find
The place, had filled it with antiques of every kind.

IX.

And to this hall, that scarce a soul had known
To be in Castle Heidelberg, he took
The Lady Marian ; and blithely shone
Her weary face, though still the far-off look
Nor once her fascinating eyes forsook.
And here, with mind so sadly overcast,
She dwelt, and fancied every niche and nook
Enchanted with a glory of the past,
While to her gladdened gaze brave legions crowded fast.

X.

Now doth her spoken name resolve the spell.
She lays aside the lute, and courtesies low,
With old-time manner that she wore so well,
And welcomes Rupert with the seeming show
Of quaint civility and mien, as though
He were some cavalier of ancient days,
Home from crusade against a Paynim foe;
While awkwardly an homage he essays,
As would beseem a knight, to win his lady's praise.

XI.

Upon a table, wreathed with tasseled fringe,
That held a fruited basket, and the floss
Of delicate embroidery, with tinge
Of color bright that shot its threads across,
He placed some fragrant flowers and mountain moss;
Then, by the window, in a rustic seat
Ensconced, addressed her: "Lady of the Schloss,
When last we did within this castle meet,
The story of thy life thou said'st thou would'st repeat."

XII.

She ran, and from her couch a cushion brought,
All richly wove with emblems quaint and old.
The moon had now her tangled tresses caught,
And through its silver fingers dropped the gold,
And purpled soft the curtains' fret and fold.
And near him sitting, on that summer night,
With lifted face, a story strange she told;
And much he marveled, in the glimmering light,
The while she seemed so pale and ghost-like to his sight:

XIII.

"Hast thou forgot the many weary days
Of tumult—how our soldiers sprang to arms,
And manned the ramparts of this guarded place,
To wait the foe, at war's first dread alarms?
When happy homes were stripped of hallowed charms,
And death and famine brooded o'er the land;
When fanes and cloisters, villages and farms,
Were all made desolate by blade and brand—
That curse which prayerful souls could never understand?

XIV.

"They called me mad—and some did shake the head,
And wise did look, and fold their arms, amazed.
They lived to rue the cruel words they said,
When courtly halls were to the pavement razed,
And death came full and sudden while they gazed.
But this I knew, and prophesied the war;
And from yon tower I saw the flames that blazed,
And heard the shrieks, and felt the heavy jar
Of cannon, thundering from the mountain heights afar.

XV.

"Too long was that fell siege the cause of woe;
Too long were crime and cruelty a game;
Too oft did vandals strike our altars low,
And, by the craven right of might, defame.
Enough—we sacrificed our rightful claim;
The foeman triumphed in our land of song;
Our banners bright were lowered, to our shame,
And beaten down; but, with resentment strong,
Within our breasts we swore swift vengeance for the wrong.

XVI.

"By secret passage to the mountain side—
A subterranean pass by Romans cleft
In ancient time, beyond the Neckar's tide—
In stealthy haste these castle halls we left,
Weak and distressed, but not of hope bereft.
All night the cautious tread of mail-clad men,
Of knightly warriors, famed, of exploits deft,
Was heard, until the morning's sun again
Beheld us refugees in mountain pass and glen.

XVII.

"The Palsgrave, Count of the Palatinate,
The ruler of the court, whom all revered,
Had, in the night, by some untoward fate,
Beyond the castle outworks disappeared,
While bravely fighting at the front. We feared
His death or capture, and were sore dismayed—
For he had to us all become endeared
By character heroic, such as made
Him feared of foes alike who met him blade to blade.

XVIII.

"Beneath the very shadows of the saints,
That rose in ranks above them, many a fane
They razed, destroying precious monuments
Of heroes in the border battles slain.
But never questioned they, by word profane,
The Palsgrave's valor with a taunting tongue.
First in the legion of a mighty train
Of sovereign knights, long will his fame be sung,
Though harps are hushed in halls where once his banners hung.

XIX.

"I hold not time, nor can I tell the change
That followed in a day or month or year;
I know that oftentimes there comes a strange
And fitful memory of days of fear,
Of scenes that left their cruel impress here.
Again laid waste were cherished fields and bowers;
Again war's tumult crashed upon the ear;
Again our banners plumed the castle towers;
The citadel was won, and Heidelberg was ours!

XX.

"Then followed days entranced, with dreamy hush
Of peace, and populous of birds and bees;
When skies were blue, and meadows 'neath them lush
Of fruitfulness, and ev'ry soothing breeze
Was laden with the cool of summer seas;
The windows, open wide, were budded o'er
With tangled bloom of woodbine and sweet peas;
The hound lay dozing on the sunlit floor,
And sweetly sang the thrush beside the open door.

XXI.

"'Twas when the violets first twinkled through
The brake, and brooks were tremulous with song;
When multitudes of rainbowed insects flew
About the fragrant hedges, and a throng
Around the dove-cots flew with pinion strong,
That, from the parapet, the warden spied,
One morning fair, a troop of horse, along
The greenwood glade below the mountain side,
In panoply of steel beyond the Neckar's tide.

XXII.

"Waved then the banners bright on tower and port,
The high portcullis glanced its iron guard,
The drawbridge chains were loosed in castle court,
And speedily the portals were unbarred;
While, from the ramparts of the upper ward,
The salvo-gun of welcome thrilled the air;
Bent were the pennons in the castle yard,
As Baron Ludwig reined his charger there,
With twenty yeomen brave his equipage to bear.

XXIII.

"He brought no tidings of the missing lord,
Though wide his search by distant moor and main:
'Was drowned,' said some, 'while fighting at the ford;'
And others—'Buried on the battle plain,
When thrice outnumbered, overpowered, and slain.'
Boasts Germany one hero of his line?
What deeds were his would bless a monarch's reign,

And bright upon historic pages shine,
Though dimmed the olden light that charmed the Palatine!

XXIV.

"'Twas on a sunny day in June; across
The stream and up the mountain avenue,
Where Gothic rocks, o'ermantled with the moss,
From lofty battlements deep shadows threw,
We paced our coursers in the morning dew;
The squirrel, haunched amid the glistening leaves,
Ran up the oak; a startled pheasant flew,
A sunset streak, across the path, and reeves
Piped in the underbrake, and nestled in the sheaves.

XXV.

"We halted 'neath a portalled arch of stone,
Where brave St. Michael's Convent lifts its walls,
With Time's old ivy mantle o'er them thrown,
That, like a friar's cassock, lightly falls,
Tossed by the breeze; our steeds in ancient stalls

Were tethered, and most bounteous the cheer
Afforded by the abbot in the halls
Made sacred to the brave dead lying here,
Above whose tombs the walls a noble fabric rear.

XXVI.

"The sunlight slanted, through the casements high,
In crimson leaves across the polished pave;
While many a banner waved its colors nigh,
Above carved cenotaph and marble nave,
With legend graven o'er each foot-worn grave.
Beyond, in shadow of the shrine, uprose
The monks to chant the requiem of the brave,
That underneath in blessed rest repose,
The while their ghosts repeat in echo at the close.

XXVII.

"It is not all to suffer as we do
By war or famine, hate or bitter jest;
For there are seasons, calm as summers new,
When grief is stifled, memories repressed,
And joys caught up unto the burdened breast,

Like flowers whose sweetness lingers for a day.
So, on this morn, as happy as the rest,
Through golden hours, I banished care away,
With that content and joy which cheer a child at play.

XXVIII.

"Unto a secret chamber of the tower,
Rich with memorials of Charlemagne,
With reminiscences of pomp and power,
Of days that were not wholly lived in vain,
Of men whose like we shall not see again,
E'en though the Palatine should hold its own,
The abbot led us, through the sacred fane,
And bade us gaze, as back a door was thrown
Upon a scene as strange as ever man hath known.

XXIX.

"Death's ghastly symbols filled the heart with dread,
And there was that which spake of hollow pride :
The broken scepter resting by the dead ;
The jeweled crown that glistened at its side ;
The rusted armor, that was open wide,

Through which, like gleaming phosphorescent lines,
A something terrible was quick descried ;
All these, the relics of the Palatines,
Brought back again the days of bloody battle-signs.

XXX.

"No light of sun or moon within the room
Had ever flung a single cheering ray ;
The torches flashed a glow athwart the gloom
From precious gems, more brilliant than the spray
Of sparkling waters on a summer day.
Urns, overtopped with jewels brighter far
Than diadems that crown a monarch's sway,
Blazed like a sun, or glimmered like a star,
Or changed to rainbow hues at e'en the slightest jar.

XXXI.

"A chest of figured metal, rusted old,
A mocking shape disclosed, grotesque and grim,
Half buried under heaps of faded gold,
Half raised by fingers clutching hard the rim,
At last borne back into the shadows dim :

And there were battered shields of ancient wear,
And gleaming goblets, beaded to the brim,
With antique jewels, clustered here and there,
And diamonds flashing bright from caskets old and rare.

XXXII.

"We were but three; none other hath beheld
The treasure saved, when Tilly took the town;
Here fled a few, by greed of gain impelled,
And bore in haste the jewels of the crown,
And rare memorials of old renown.
Here, by the secret pass, a league below,
Upon that night when, with our banners down,
The castle yielded to its cruel foe,
They came with stealthy step a weary time ago.

XXXIII.

"They came and hid them here within the tower,
And kept their counsel; for each breath that bore
The prayers to heaven, at morn and evening hour,
Of cowlèd friars, held their fate in store:
Inquisitorial pain and torture sore,

By rack or wheel, were theirs had they been known.
But oh! the fate they suffered—for the door
Was barred complete by fallen wall and stone,
In that most cruel war, ere many days had flown!

XXXIV.

"They died a living death. The flowers have bloomed
Above their sepulcher for many a year;
The lizard crept above them here entombed;
But they were known not, nor did people hear
One shriek of pain, or moan of horrid fear.
The spider flung its bridge across the mold,
The ivy wove a pall above their bier,
And hawks of hooded eye have clutched their hold
In hunting season oft above this dungeon old.

XXXV.

"Upon our lips the abbot placed the seal
Of strictest secrecy; no word was said
From that day unto this, for never weal
Could have ensued, were other mortal led
Unto this treasure-chamber of the dead.

The ponderous door was swung, with hollow sound,
Upon its hinges, as we turned with dread,
And sought the sunlight and the open ground,
Where wave the grand old oaks with nature's jewels crowned.

* * * * * * *

XXXVI.

"The ruined abbey of my childhood's home ;
The glimpse of mountains ; streams that flash on high,
Bounding from cliff to cliff in snowy foam,
And crushing past brave walls with maddened cry;
The starry host in triumph marching by,
With blazing banners, to the land of suns ;
The lightning, building steps unto the sky
With marvelous speed—such thrill the ones
Who dwell, as I have dwelt, by rock-ribbed garrisons !

XXXVII.

"And so about brave Heidelberg hath been
Quick impulse given to memory of days
Tinged with romance, that made my heart, akin

To scenes of chivalry, and ever ways
Heroic won their meed of heart-felt praise.
The storm upon the mountains hath its song,
Whose ringing eloquence my spirit sways,
And war hath stamped its cruel impress strong
Upon my soul to urge the right against the wrong.

XXXVIII.

"How long, I care not; many years have flown
Since, on that sunny morn, we bade adieu
To those old convent walls; the weeds have grown
About the garden, and the pious few
Long since have passed away from mortal view.
And how the abbot died no records show,
And there are living those who never knew
The circumstance, or ever cared to know
The story of a time that seems so long ago.

* * * * * *

XXXIX.

"By some strange happening, suspicion fell
Of treasure stored in secret hiding-place
Beneath St. Michael's ancient penance cell.

The rumor spread abroad, and flew apace,
And caused much gossip with the men of grace
About the abbot's penitential life.
The Church was joined against the populace,
Engendering feuds, until such deeds were rife
As threatened to repeat the scenes of former strife.

XL.

"But still the jewel chamber of the tower
Defied all quest, and so time wore away.
The summer came again with fruit and flower,
And seas of sunshine; birds of plumage gay
Flashed in the pheasant-garden; every day
Was weighed with indolence and drowsy dream;
The cattle in the old oak's shadow lay
With half-shut lids, and all the earth did seem
To lie entranced beneath the hot sun's slanted beam.

XLI.

"'Twas on a day like these, the abbot, bent
On holy mission to the distant Rhine,
Toiled to the castle, up the steep ascent,
And, resting here, beneath the sheltering vine,
Partook our welcome cheer of food and wine.

The noon air glimmered with the tropic heat ;
The locust shrilly, at its leafy shrine,
Hymned from the trees, and bees, with burden sweet,
Lingered about the flowers, and toiled with busy feet.

XLII.

"Before he left us on that summer noon,
He stood with lifted hands above the vale,
To bless the people, praying for the boon
Of sweet forgiveness for the grief and bale
Their foe had wrought by mountain and by dale.
He placed the convent key within my hand,
And bade me guard it as it were the Grail
Dropped in the passage of the angel band,
A trust that time would bring my heart to understand.

XLIII.

"Along the edges of the mountain eaves
The faint air trembled with a muttering sound ;
A breeze sprang up and lightly caught the leaves,
And whirled them in the sunlight from the ground ;
The birds flew upward, twittering around

The aviary, when the sky grew dark
With sudden cloud, the fretted waters frowned,
Chafing to dash the freighted barge and bark
Against the threatening rocks that crouched in shadows stark.

XLIV.

"Far down the mountain path, I saw the form
Of the good abbot in the forest fade
Amid the racking fury of the storm.
We sought the keep; below, the wooded glade
Quivered amain with sudden light and shade;
While down in sheeted torrents crashed the rain;
Madly the tempest mocked the prayers we said;
The vivid lightning flashed across the pane;
And echoes rose and fell, prolonged upon the plain.

XLV.

"'Twas after nightfall ere the flying clouds
Betokened peace; across the moon they passed,
Like phantoms flitting by in baffled crowds,
Their white locks trailing in the raging blast.
The forest glades were in deep shadow cast,

While down the slope the tumbling waters fell,
To mingle with the Neckar's flood ;—at last
The storm had ended, but no words can tell
The sorrow of that night, or aught its gloom dispel.

XLVI.

"We sat within the castle's grand saloon,
The Baron Ludwig reading, at my side,
A quaint old legend of the wild Wolfsbrun,
When suddenly the doors were opened wide ;
Along the halls we heard the hasty stride
Of men-at-arms ; then voices, as of fear ;
And in the dusky gloom was soon descried
A gleam of torches, and a shrouded bier
Borne through the corridor unto a chamber near.

XLVII.

"With reverent hand we raised the silken pall,
And gazed upon the form that rested there
Like some poor, weary soul asleep, and all
Life's burden lifted in the hush of prayer.
With ashen face the baron met the stare

Of all who heard his words impassionate,
As back he flung the cassock in the glare :
'*No abbot this*,' he said, '*but one as great :*
Behold the Palsgrave of the Court Palatinate!'

XLVIII.

"He flung aside the cassock in the glare,
And bared the royal plait and golden brede.
Beneath the abbot's garb of priestly wear
We saw the noble form of one indeed
Who served the castle in its hour of need.
For, when the battle ended on that day,
And brave men lay by river and by mead,
The Palsgrave flung his broken blade away,
And hied to convent walls for blessed peace to pray."

* * * * * *

XLIX.

The lady ceased. The lamplight flickered faint,
Its bluish glare blent with the moonlight pale,
And, for the silence, statued priest and saint
Seemed to have listened to the wondrous tale,
And echoed judgment in a distant wail.

Old Rupert gazed, expectant-eyed, across
The grand old battlements, as, from the vale,
To see brave banners in the moonlight toss,
And harquebuse and lance to flash beyond the fosse.

L.

The good-night said, he left her at the porch,
While strange emotions thrilled his aged frame,
And still the porter, by neglected torch,
That, from its sconce, emitted scarce a flame,
Lay dreaming of brave deeds on fields of fame.
The echoed cry afar of watchful hound
Baying the moon upon the night air came,
The while grim sentinels seemed pacing round
The dark old castle heights with many a turret crowned.

LI.

Upon the morrow, in fair Marian's room,
At the first hush of twilight, Rupert stood,
And peered with shading palm into the gloom,
Disturbed in spirit, and of restless mood;
While much he marveled at the solitude

That overhung the hall with shroud of shade.
But neither here nor there, seek where he would,
Was seen the Lady Marian, though he made
Long search about the halls, where oft her footsteps strayed.

LII.

Then, faint at heart, good Rupert sought the town,
For aid the missing lady's steps to trace,
And, like brave cavaliers of old renown,
A host of men, within the briefest space,
By hall and corridor, did storm the place,
With blaze of torches in the arches weird.
For there was none but loved the gentle face
Of Lady Marian, and none but feared
'Twas by some woeful fate that she had disappeared.

LIII.

The night wore on, but not a trace was found
Of the pale lady, till a faint halloo
Within the far-off corridors did sound—
A cry that rang in distant echoes through
The vaulted halls, in summons to the hue

For those in search who wandered from the rest,
When thither hastened these, at once, unto
The tower that sentinels the portaled west,
Whose large and lofty rooms brave memories suggest.

LIV.

They stood beside a rounded court, whose hall
Had echoed to the sound of sword and shield,
In the dim ages of the past, and, all
Amazed, they gazed upon the sight revealed
Through crumbling wall that hitherto concealed
An alcove carven in that massive stone,
Which unto well-directed blows did yield;
When back they sprang aghast, and would have flown
But for the very fear their souls could not disown.

LV.

Was that prone shape, so marble in its stare,
The Lady Marian, so pure and true?
Lo! as they gazed, it faded into air,
Became as nothing, like the morning dew
When breaking clouds have let the sunlight through.

It changed to dust, its very substance fled,
For there, at once, upon their wondering view
Of ages past, a sudden light was shed,
That for a moment held the fabric of the dead!

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